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DORCHESTER



L.C.DENNIS

ST. BERIN,
THE APOSTLE OF WESSEX

SAINT BERIN

THE APOSTLE OF WESSEX

*THE HISTORY, LEGENDS, AND TRADITIONS
OF THE BEGINNING OF THE
WEST-SAXON CHURCH*

BY
JOHN EDWARD FIELD, M.A.
VICAR OF BENSON.

Et ambulabunt Gentes in lumine ejus, et Reges terræ afferent gloriam suam et honorem in illam.—Rev. xxi. 24.

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IN PIOUS AND GRATEFUL MEMORY OF
THE RIGHT REVEREND
WILLIAM,
THIRTY-SECOND LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD,
AND EIGHTY-NINTH BISHOP IN SUCCESSION FROM ST. BERIN,
WHO, WHILE HE WAS YET AMONG US,
GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED THE
Dedication
OF THIS VOLUME

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PREFACE

A MILLENNIUM and a quarter has gone by since "the Apostle of Wessex" closed a life which deserves a front place in the memories of all who are faithful to the English Church and loyal to the English throne. His work can hardly be said to have received a recognition proportionate to its merits or to the greatness of the results which have ensued from it; and several causes have contributed to this neglect. First, the records which have been preserved of him are few and scanty. Even his name is handed down in an uncertain form; for while the traditions of his district and several other important authorities call him Berin (pronounced as Berrin), he appears in the majority of historians as Birinus. And here an apology may seem requisite for adopting in this work a form of the name which is less familiar; but it is hoped that a sufficient justification will be found when the question is presently examined. Then there is a similar uncertainty about the saint's nationality; for his name is evidently not Latin, yet he is commonly spoken of as a Roman. The seat of his bishopric, too—the Oxfordshire Dorchester,—though it had been a Roman city, was one of which history has recorded nothing; and the early removal of the See to

Winchester took away whatever importance may have been acquired by the first West Saxon See-town. Then there remained no great church at Dorchester to treasure its annals; and when Bishop Daniel of Winchester was supplying Venerable Bede with notes of West Saxon history, there was little that he could discover about the beginnings of his own bishopric. Necessarily, too, among the foremost founders of our Church, all other figures are overshadowed by that of St. Augustine, who first brought Christianity to the English. Indeed the names of the early Northumbrian bishops, Paulinus and Aidan, Chad and Wilfrid, are better known than that of Berin, partly because of the dignity to which the See of York afterwards attained, and partly because Northumbria became the first great seat of English learning, and thus its records became ample. Even at Winchester the fame of St. Berin, who lived far away upon the Thames, was eclipsed in the eyes of churchmen of the next ages by the memory of their own bishop, St. Swithun; and while they revered their founder and honoured his bones, they looked to their local saint with still deeper reverence and gave him the more splendid enshrinement.

Looking back now over the twelve hundred and fifty years, we can gaze at those bright lights which first enlightened the darkness of our land, as we would watch the stars in the distant sky. We can fix with closer accuracy their true positions, and measure the orbits on which they moved, and assign to each its own proper magnitude. St. Augustine can never be robbed of the halo which surrounds his name as the Apostle of England. If we inquire who stands next beside him, it has been

said by a high authority, with some exaggeration yet with a strong basis of fact, that St. Aidan "is the true Apostle of England."¹ And the work of St. Felix also in East Anglia proved itself a strong and lasting work. But towards the eventual triumph of Christianity against all resistance, and towards the final union of the ancient church of Britain with that of Britain's conquerors, none of the several missions bore a more important part than that which St. Berin undertook in the central district of Wessex and Mercia.

The royal house of Wessex, to which he brought the faith, was destined to become two centuries later the royal house of England: the king of that day was the "cyning," the "son of the kin," the leader of the kindred that followed him: and the West Saxon kindred, whom, with their King Cynegils, Berin christened, was on its way towards supremacy among the various kindreds that have made England. For the Sovereign whom England honours now is the remote descendant of Cerdic the Saxon, whose race Berin christened. At that time a side-branch of Cerdic's stock was reigning, to be displaced very soon by the children of the main stock; for after two sons of Cynegils had reigned they were succeeded by their third-cousins, the great-grandsons of Ceawlin, three of whom were kings in turn; and from one of the branches of that family came Egbert, the grandfather of Alfred the Great. He was fourth in descent from Ingild, brother of the famous Ina, and these were third in descent from Cutha, the youngest son of Cuthwine the son of Ceawlin. King Edward VII., therefore, is not the descendant of Cynegils, but of his

¹ Bishop Lightfoot, *Leaders in the Northern Church*, p. 9.

great-uncle, Ceawlin the grandson of Cerdic, through a line of forty-three ancestors.¹ Doubtless, if St. Berin had failed in his mission to Cynegils, the same end would eventually have been brought about by other means: but the fact remains that the Christianity which hallows the royal house of England is the direct result of this mission of St. Berin.

The story of the saint has been told so eloquently by the late Dr. Bright, in his *Chapters of Early English Church History*,² that probably nothing remains to be added from the strictly historical point of view. But there are popular traditions in the district around Dorchester which deserve to be collected and considered for the sake of any light that may be gathered from them. And in the legends related by the old monastic chroniclers, however trivial they may appear at first sight, there are always points of interest which are worth examining. Besides all this, there is much in the domain of archæology which connects itself with the story, and helps to complete the sum of it. And, lastly, there are liturgical commemorations, to be found in the ancient service-books, which may fitly be taken into account as helping us at least to see the picture of the saint as our forefathers looked at it.

The present volume, therefore, cannot pretend to be more than a collection of antiquarian details, of a somewhat varied character, gathered together as materials from which historians may perhaps find something that is useful in building up more perfectly the fabric of our history. Meanwhile I offer them as a humble tribute to

¹ Appendix, Note II.

² The references are to the 3rd Edition, 1897.

the memory of the saint who, in the quaint phrase of an old Saxon charter, was "baptism-father" to King Cynegils of Wessex, and who is therefore to be honoured as "baptism-father" to the long line of England's sovereigns.

It will be convenient now to enumerate the sources from which our knowledge of the saint's life is to be derived.

I. BEDE'S ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.—Venerable Bede, who died just a century after the beginning of St. Berin's mission, wrote his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* in the monastery of Jarrow-on-the-Tyne, and completed it to the year 731. In it he tells us that he had the assistance of the abbot Albinus of Canterbury, by whose advice he undertook the work; and also of Nothelm, a presbyter of London (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), who searched the archives of the church in Rome for matters relating to England: Daniel, bishop of Winchester, also contributed notes from the annals of Wessex and Sussex; and other prelates and the inmates of various religious houses gave him further aid. By this means Bede has collected a mass of trustworthy information, drawn from records which were then existing, but most of which the lapse of time and the ravages of the Danes afterwards destroyed. Legend and fable are mixed with it, and we can detect inaccuracies sometimes; but our knowledge of the period preceding Bede's time is often more complete than what later chronicles can give us of the next period. Unfortunately, however, his account of St. Berin's mission is extremely brief, consisting of only two hundred words. Four early manuscripts of the History are in existence, written in the

same century in which the author died. There is also an English translation of it, ascribed by an early tradition to Alfred the Great, and preserved to us in manuscripts of the tenth century.

II. THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE.—Our second authority is the series of records known as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which, in its original form, was compiled a century and a half after Bede's time. It has four brief entries relating to St. Berin's life, derived for the most part from Bede and partly from some other source. It also adds the year in which each event was believed to have taken place. The compilation of the Chronicle was probably undertaken in the time of Alfred the Great, and under his directions. Geoffrey Gaimar, in his Norman-French *Estorie des Engles*, written before the middle of the twelfth century, states that King Alfred had the Chronicle kept in the bishop's palace at Winchester, where it was fixed by a chain so that any who would might read it.

“Ore est issi auctorizez
K'a Wincestre en l'eveskez
La est des reis la dreite estorie
E les vies e la memorie.
Li reis Elfred l'out en demaine,
Fermer i fist une chaine.
Ki lire i volt bien i guardast,
Mais de son liu n'el remuast.”¹

Copies were made with more or less variation for different monasteries, and were continued down to various dates. Six manuscripts have been preserved. The oldest of them (A), now in the library of Corpus Christi College in Cambridge, is written in a single hand to the

¹ *Estorie des Engles* (Rolls Series, 91), lines 2333-2340.

year 891. There is little doubt that it is the original writing of that year, and not a copy; and therefore it may well be the actual document which was compiled for King Alfred at Winchester. The second Ms. (B), written in one hand to the year 977, belonged to the monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury, and is now in the Cottonian Collection in the British Museum (Tib. A. vi.). In the same collection (Tib. B. i. and iv.) are two Mss. of the eleventh century; the former of them (C), supposed to have belonged to Abingdon Abbey, has the same handwriting to 1066; and the latter (D) is just fifty years earlier, but is useless for our present purpose, as it is deficient in the portion relating to the period of St. Berin. There are also two Mss. of the twelfth century: one (E), written in one hand to 1122, probably belonged to Peterborough since several charters relating to that monastery are transcribed into it, and is now among Archbishop Laud's Mss. (no. 636), in the Bodleian Library; the other (F), written less carefully than the rest, is among the Cottonian Mss. (Dom. A. viii.).¹ The Chronicle has obviously a special value for all that relates to the West Saxon Church and people, not only as supplying us with further information, but also as corroborating the statements which are found in Bede.

III. ETHELWERD'S CHRONICLE.²—Ethelwerd, a grandson of King Ethelred (or, according to some authorities, of Alfred), wrote his Chronicle down to the year of the accession of King Edward the Martyr, 975. Of the

¹ The particulars of these Mss. are chiefly taken from Parker's *Early History of Oxford*, pp. 123, 124.

² In Petrie's *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, p. 499.

mission of "Byrinus," his account is simply a free Latin rendering from the Saxon Chronicle.

IV. *ÆLFRIC'S HOMILIES*.—Among the *Hómilies* of Archbishop Ælfric, who held the see of Canterbury from 995 to 1005, there is one for the festival of St. Oswald (August 5).¹ It consists of a Life of the saint, and includes the account of St. Berin's mission to Cynegils and St. Oswald's part in the king's conversion. This is a free paraphrase, in a quasi-metrical form, from Bede's History, mentioning the same facts that are given there, with a single exception which will be noticed in its place.

V. *THE YORK BREVIARY LECTON*.—There is a brief *Lectio de Sancto Birino* in the York Breviary on the festival of his Translation, September 4th. It begins with an account of the saint's fame in Rome before his mission; the central portion is merely a paraphrase of Bede, adding nothing to what he has told us; and the last part is an account of the Translation of the saint's body to Winchester and its subsequent enshrinement by Bishop Ethelwold. According to Rudborne's History of Winchester, compiled in the fifteenth century, this enshrinement took place in the time of King Edgar. He died in 975. But the passage in the Breviary was probably written after 984, the year of the bishop's death, for it describes him as "Blessed Ethelwold, a man of great religion." Rudborne speaks of the same enshrinement by St. Ethelwold as related in "the Lection which is read in the church of Winton in the octave of the translation of St. Birin."² This may well have been the same lection

¹ *Ælfric's Lives of the Saints* (ed. W. W. Skeat), E. E. Text Soc., Vol. II., p. 124.

² Rudborne, *Hist. Maj. Wint.*, Lib. III., cap. xij.

that we find at York. Its purpose is to exalt the fame and the virtues of the founder of the West Saxon Church and to link his memory with the great monastic development which was carried out by St. Dunstan and King Edgar, and which Ethelwold of Winchester energetically supported. We must suppose that the lection was compiled under the influence of this religious movement, at a date not long after the concluding event which it records. From the Benedictines' house at Winchester it might readily pass into use in their great abbey of St. Mary at York, and thence into the Breviary of the Minster.

VI. GOSCELIN'S (?) LIFE.—A very prolix *Vita Sancti Birini*, compiled not later than the eleventh century, is based upon the brief account which we have in the York Breviary, every clause of which is embedded in it; but the two hundred words of the lection are here expanded into nearly five thousand; and it is curious to note how the compiler became at last weary of his tedious task, and left the latter portion of the lection almost without expansion. He has incorporated much legendary matter which is evidently derived from some other source and not merely from his own imagination. The only writer who has been suggested as a possible author of this life is Goscelin,¹ a monk of Canterbury, who died about the year 1100. He wrote lives of St. Swithun and several other saints in a similar style; the most famous being his Life of St. Augustine, which is characterised like this with much industry and extreme prolixity. It will therefore be convenient, for lack of a better title, to refer to this Life of St. Berin as Goscelin's.

¹ Sir T. D. Hardy's *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland* (Rolls Ser. 26), I., pt. i., p. 236.

Six copies of it have come down to us, chiefly written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; two of them being among the Cottonian Mss. in the British Museum, and four in the Bodleian Library.¹ Of the two in the British Museum, one is very imperfect, about a third of its leaves having been destroyed at the end. The other is contained in a beautiful illuminated Ms. (Tib. D. iv.), consisting of about five hundred and sixty-four pages of Lives of Saints and other historical and legendary passages, upwards of forty in number. Eleven pages (foll. 256 *b* to 261 *b*) are occupied with St. Birin, and he is immediately followed by St. Swithun and St. Ethelwold, bishops of Winchester; then comes a short passage "On the New Dedication of the Old Church which took place the thirteenth day before the Kalends of November" (that is, according to Rudborne, in 980); after which the volume ends with a Life of St. Dunstan, whose connection with St. Ethelwold has been already mentioned. All this is sufficient indication that it is a Winchester Ms. Its date is pronounced to be about the year 1200. Its edges have been damaged by fire, and hence a line here and there is obscured or destroyed.

The first of the four copies of the Life in the Bodleian is probably the earliest of all. It is contained in a small Ms. volume (Digby 39) of the twelfth or perhaps of the eleventh century, carefully written by different but similar hands, and almost uninjured. It contains a collection of passages of the same general character as those in the Cottonian Ms., but only nine in number, and the Life of St. Berin appears to be the only one which they have in common. Its contents are, (1) The Passion of St.

¹ See Hardy's *Descriptive Catalogue*, I. i., p. 235.

Tecla, (2) The Passion of St. Blaise, (3) The Miracles of St. Edmund, (4) A Sermon of Bishop Fulbert on the Nativity of St. Mary, (5) The Translation of Blessed James the Apostle, (6) Passages relating to St. Birin, (7) The Life of St. Alfege, (8) The Miracles of Holy Mary Mother of God, (9) The Prologue of St. Jerome on Baruch, and other passages relating to Jeremiah and Baruch. It may be noted that Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, an eloquent upholder of the more advanced teachings of his day, died in 1028; and this may give a clue to the period to which the various documents contained in the Ms. may be supposed generally to belong. The section relating to St. Birin occupies fully one-fourth of the volume, and contains (*a*) the chapter of Bede giving an account of the saint and his two successors, with a few lines prefixed stating the date of his coming—five and a half pages; (*b*) a Homily for his Festival—seven pages; (*c*) the proper portions of the Mass for the two Festivals of his Translation and his Deposition, and the heading of a “Carmen Jubilationis” for the latter Festival—one and a half pages; but here a folio is lost, and the “Carmen” has disappeared, together with the heading of the next section; (*d*) the Life of St. Birin—thirty-six pages. If we may conclude that the Life, like the other passages, is a copy from a previously existing document rather than an original composition of the writer of this Ms., this agrees with the suggestion that it may have been the work of Goscelin.

The volume belonged to Abingdon Abbey, as is shown by an entry at the commencement: *Liber beate Marie Abbendon.* And since the monastery of Winchester was supplied with Benedictine monks from Abingdon when

B

the secular clergy were ejected from it by King Edgar and Bishop Ethelwold in 963, there was an intimate connection between the two houses. The Homily which precedes the Life was certainly composed at Winchester, for it speaks of the body of St. Birin being "translated into this city."¹ The evidence, therefore, of this Ms., like that of the other, points to the inference that it came from Winchester.

VII. THE ROMSEY LIFE.—Among the Mss. of the Lansdowne Collection in the British Museum there is a volume (436) of the fourteenth century inscribed in a contemporary hand: *Iste liber est de librario ecclesie sancte Marie et sancte Ethelflede virginis de Romsey*. It contained forty-seven lives of saints, of which the last four are wanting. A passage *De sancto Birino* occupies something over three pages (folios 30 to 31 b), divided into five short chapters. It has much in common with the longer Life, but is less than a quarter of the length; and a comparison of the two shows clearly that this is an abbreviated edition of the other and not a copy of an older original from which that was expanded. Almost all the contents of this are found in the other, and much of it is in the same words, but a few lines from Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum* are inserted. The volume begins also with a brief Chronicle based on Malmesbury. In the account of St. Birin two points are noteworthy; first that among the passages of the longer Life which are omitted here are those which extol the fame of Winchester and the virtues of St. Ethelwold; and secondly that the writer is evidently unacquainted with the Breviary Lection on which the older Life is based, as he omits its expres-

¹ Appendix, Note VII.

sions in a way which would have been hardly possible if he had been familiar with it. We may conclude that this Life, of which no other copy is known to exist,¹ was in all probability compiled for the inmates of the Benedictine nunnery at Romsey.

VIII. LIFE IN LATIN VERSE.—A Life of St. Birin in six hundred and sixty-five Latin hexameter lines, dedicated to Peter, bishop of Winchester—doubtless Peter des Roches who held that see from 1205 to 1238,—is a metrical paraphrase of the chief parts of the earlier Life. Two copies exist, both of the thirteenth century; one being in the Public Library at Canterbury (Dd. xi. 78), and the other in the Bodleian Library (Ms. Bodl. 40). It has been attributed to William of Ramsey, a monk of Croyland; but he is believed to have died about 1180.² The Bodleian manuscript is headed, in a seventeenth-century hand, *Alexander Essebiensis* (*i. e.* of Ashby), implying that some at least of the poems contained in it are the work of this writer. He was prior of the Austin Priory of Ashby in Northamptonshire about the year 1220.³ Camden knew this Life, as he quotes in his *Britannia*,⁴ under Dorchester, some lines of the prologue, quaintly contrasting St. Birin with Hercules and Alexander of Macedon, for the one conquered his foes, and the other the world, but the saint conquered both and himself also. The verses add nothing to our knowledge of the saint; but they are not without considerable poetic skill, and are especially remarkable for their ingenious playing upon words and cleverness of

¹ See Hardy's *Descriptive Catalogue*, I. i., p. 237 (No. 627).

² *Ibid.* p. 237.

³ *Dict. Nat. Biogr.*

⁴ Page 295 (ed. 1616).

alliteration. Specimens of it are given at the headings of the chapters in the present work.

IX. CAPGRAVE'S LIFE.—Another account of St. Berin, which may be most conveniently spoken of as Capgrave's Life, is prefixed to a detailed account of proceedings taken under Pope Honorius III., in the years 1224 and 1226, to investigate the controversy between the churches of Dorchester and Winchester as to which of them possessed the saint's true body. This subject occupies more than two-thirds of the entire work, and the actual Life of the saint is less than one-third. There can be little doubt that this Life was compiled for the position in which it stands, and is therefore not earlier than 1226. Baronius attributes it to William of Ramsey; but as he died about 1180 it cannot be his work. It is based on Bede; but the facts, as we shall see, are obviously perverted with a view to exalting the papacy. It also contains the same legends of miracle as the other Life; but it is not an abbreviated edition of the other, and it is independent of the Breviary Lection on which that is based. When these three documents are compared together, it seems clear that there was an original account behind them all, giving traditions which are not in Bede. This short Life first appears in a Ms. volume of Lives of Saints in the British Museum,¹ known as the *Sanctilogium*, and supposed to have been collected by John of Tinmouth, a monk of St. Alban's of the middle of the fourteenth century. From that collection it was inserted in the *Nova Legenda Angliæ* of John Capgrave, the monk of

¹ Cott. Tib. E. 1. See Hardy's *Descriptive Catalogue*, I. i., pp. 20, 236.

Lynn, who died in 1464, and whose work was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1516.¹

There is a brief English version of this Life in the abridged translation of Capgrave's work, published in the same year, 1516, under the title of *The Kalendre of the Newe Legende of Englande*, and described in the colophon as "emprynted to the honour of the gloriose Seynts therin conteyned by Richarde Pynson prynter to our soveraygne lorde Kynge Henry the VIII."

Another edition of the same Life, in the original Latin, with a few words altered and some errors corrected, is included in the collection of Lives of Saints (*De probatis Sanctorum Historiis*) compiled by Laurence Surius and published at Cologne in 1575.²

X. ENGLISH METRICAL LIFE.—There is another Life, relating the saint's history in one hundred and ten lines of English verse, with the same legends that are found in the Lives previously mentioned. It has been attributed to Robert of Gloucester, of the time of Edward I., and is very similar in style to his metrical "Chronicle of England," presently to be noticed. Three copies of it exist, differing hardly more than verbally, in manuscripts containing Lives of Saints and other religious pieces of a miscellaneous character, all in English verse. I have used for the most part the text of a "Liber Festivalis" of the fifteenth century in the Library of Trinity College,

¹ In the Oxford reprint (ed. C. Horstmann, 1901) the passage *De Sancto Birino* is in Vol. I., pp. 118-122.

² Another *Vita S. Birini episcopi* in a Ms. of the twelfth century in the Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris, No. 5362, is noted in Hardy's *Catalogue*, I. i., p. 238 (No. 634). But this is merely the passage of Bede, III. 7. I am indebted to the Rev. W. E. Scott-Hall for ascertaining this. Hardy also mentions (No. 630) "A short account of St. Birinus" in Ms. Alençon 4, of the twelfth century.

Oxford. The other manuscripts—one of the same century, and one of the fourteenth—are in the Bodleian, and these are occasionally followed where they happen to give the sense more clearly.¹

XI. **MEDIÆVAL CHRONICLERS.**—The story of St. Berin is told with more or less fulness by several of the principal historians of the twelfth and following centuries. The *Chronicon ex Chronicis* of FLORENCE OF WORCESTER,² who died in 1118, merely gives a brief summary of Bede's account, inserting the dates from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Another summary, almost equally brief, derived from the twelfth-century Chronicle of St. Alban's Abbey (often, but erroneously, called "Matthew of Westminster"), is preserved in the *Flores Historiarum* of ROGER OF WENDOVER,³ and the *Chronica Majora* of MATTHEW OF PARIS,⁴ both of whom wrote in the earlier half of the thirteenth century. The *Annales* of ALFRED OF BEVERLEY,⁵ who died about the year 1130, merely record the principal events. A similar brief record is in *L'estorie des Engles* of GEOFFREY GAIMAR,⁶ already mentioned. HENRY OF HUNTINGDON, in his *Historie Anglorum*,⁷ produced in 1135, copies the passage of Bede almost verbally. RALPH DE DICETO, dean of St. Paul's, who died about 1202, reproduces in his *Abbreviationes Chronicorum*⁸ the short note of Florence of Worcester. The same is also paraphrased in the rhyming *Chronicle* of ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER,⁹ written in Edward I.'s reign. At the close of the fourteenth century,

¹ See Hardy's *Catalogue*, I. i., p. 239 (No. 636).

² Ed. B. Thorpe, 1848.

⁴ Rolls Series, 57.

⁶ Rolls Series, 91.

⁸ Rolls Series, 68.

³ Rolls Series, 95.

⁵ Ed. Hearne, 1716.

⁷ Rolls Series, 74.

⁹ Rolls Series, 86.

RICHARD OF CIRENCESTER, a monk of Westminster, in his *Speculum Historiale de Gestis Regum Angliæ*,¹ incorporates the passage from Matthew Paris.

The first historian who gives us a fuller story of St. Berin is WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY. As the great abbey of that town owed the existence of its famous library chiefly to his exertions, he had ample materials for his histories. His "Acts of the English Bishops" (*Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*)² were written about 1125. He follows Bede's account very closely, but alters almost every word. He also introduces the curious legend of the saint's voyage across the Channel and his walking on the water, which Goscelin's Life of St. Berin relates still more fully; and he gives it with sufficient difference to make it probable that he is not borrowing directly from this, but from the same source which this had.

The *Polychronicon* of RANULPH HIGDEN,³ a monk of the abbey of St. Werburg at Chester, was finished in or about 1357. It makes use of Bede and the Saxon Chronicle, and also inserts the legend which we have in Malmesbury. It is the more interesting because we possess two early English versions of it; one of contemporary date, made by John Trevisa, a native of Cornwall, who became Fellow of Queen's College in Oxford and afterwards Vicar of Berkeley; the other less than a century later, made by an unknown writer of the time of Henry VI.

The CHRONICLE OF HYDE ABBEY⁴ at Winchester (*Liber Hyde*) was compiled about the close of the fourteenth century. The writer knew Higden's work,

¹ Rolls Series, 30.

² Rolls Series, 52.

³ Rolls Series, 41.

⁴ Rolls Series, 45.

but gives legendary details which show that he went to sources independent either of Higden or of Malmesbury.

In the Chronicle of Jervaulx Abbey (*Chronicon Jorvallense*), commonly called by the name of JOHN BROMTON¹ who was appointed abbot of that house in 1436, but apparently compiled in the previous century, there is a more lengthy account of St. Berin, based upon that which we have in the York Lection, but also amplified from Bede and incorporating the chief legendary incidents which are given in the mediæval Lives.

Thus we have as many as seven accounts in which these mythical stories appear more or less fully; and for the most part they seem to point to one common original, to which Goscelin, or whoever was the writer of the lengthy Life in the eleventh century, added his liberal embellishments, and which was still accessible in an earlier form to chroniclers in the fifteenth century.

It remains to notice the *History of the Monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury*, compiled by THOMAS OF ELMHAM,² who was a monk of that house and left it in 1414 to join the Cluniac Order. The section "Of the Conversion of the West Saxons" is derived from Bede and from Malmesbury, but it adds nothing to what we get in them, and it omits Malmesbury's legend.

Two other compilations also give the account of St. Berin from Bede with additional details from other sources; and the value of their additions is the greater because the extravagant stories told by Malmesbury and

¹ In Twisden's *Hist. Angl. decem Scriptores*, 1652.

² Rolls Series, 8.

others are not included. These are the *Annals of the Monastery of Winchester*, compiled perhaps by RICHARD OF DEVIZES¹ in the reign of Henry II. ; and the *History of the Church of Winchester*, by THOMAS RUDBORNE,² a monk of that place who died in 1442.

Thus we are brought to the conclusion that there must have been some record or records of the events of St. Berin's mission, giving fuller details than Bede knew, and written at some period considerably before the Norman Conquest. What can be gathered of the contents of such a record, and whether anything of value can be found in them, are questions which the present work will attempt to answer, or at least provide materials for answering. But it is evident that Bede and the Saxon Chronicle are the only authorities upon which full reliance can be placed ; and if little or nothing that is historically trustworthy can be discovered from the later writers, their legends and traditions still have, in one way or another, their features of interest.

It remains to add that my grateful acknowledgments are due to several persons who have kindly given me assistance or information of various kinds. I am bound especially to mention the courtesy of the Librarian and Sub-librarians of the Bodleian and the Librarian of Trinity College, Oxford ; the information relating to Winchester Cathedral supplied by the Dean of Durham ; help in the interpretation of Old English by Professors Earle and Skeat ; in liturgical matters by the Rev. F. E. Warren and the Rev. E. S. Dewick ; and in local antiquities by the Rev. T. Williams of Aston Clinton. I

¹ In *Annales Monastici*, Vol. II. (Rolls Series, 36).

² In Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, 1689.

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J. E. F.

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SAINT BERIN

THE APOSTLE OF WESSEX

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

“Alte Parens, humilem non aspernere poetam,
Sed potius dignere precor, Birine, labori
Aspirare meo : nec enim fiducia musæ
Certa meæ movet istud opus, sed missio Petri
Me quasi compellens, causaque valencior omni
Summa tuæ laudis totum cantanda per ævum.”

Alexander Essebiensis, 11-16.

THIRTY-SEVEN years had passed since St. Augustine landed with his companions at Ebbsfleet in the Isle of Thanet, and was welcomed to Canterbury by the Kentish king Ethelbert and his Christian queen Bertha, the daughter of King Charibert of Paris, in the year of our Lord 597. At Canterbury Augustine had in due course taken his appointed place as archbishop ; thence in 604 he had sent out his missions, each with its bishop, Justus to Rochester and Mellitus to London ; and in 625 another of his companions, Paulinus, had been sent as bishop to York, to accompany Ethelbert's daughter, Ethelburga, who married Edwin the Northumbrian king. But the

London mission had come to an untimely end ; for when King Sabert, the nephew of Ethelbert, died in 616, his sons rejected the faith which he had professed ; the bishop was expelled ; and the kingdom of Essex became once more a heathen wilderness. The mission in Northumbria had prospered abundantly : King Edwin had at last accepted the gospel under the influence of his queen and the bishop Paulinus : but in 633 Edwin fell in battle, and his nephews, who succeeded him in the two divisions of his kingdom, relapsed into paganism ; the widowed Ethelburga returned to the home of her kindred ; and Paulinus, returning with her, accepted the vacant bishopric of Rochester. Thus it was only in Kent that any organised Church of St. Augustine's mission continued to survive.

In East Anglia St. Felix of Burgundy had now been busy for three years with the work to which King Sigebert had invited him, having the seat of his bishopric upon the coast of the South-Folk at Dunwich.

Such was the condition of English Christianity in the year of our Lord 634. South of the Thames the Church maintained a struggling existence in the Kentish kingdom ; while among the neighbouring Saxons Essex had rejected it, and no attempt had yet been made to give it either to Sussex or to Wessex. North of the Thames a new Church was springing up among the Eastern Angles ; Northumbria, as a kingdom, had fallen away, though doubtless large numbers of its people retained their Christianity ; and in the kingdom of the Mercians or Western Angles the faith was still unknown.

Meanwhile, the two powers of Wessex and Mercia, on either side of the great dividing line, had been growing

in strength and influence. Each of them was destined in turn to become the dominant kingdom, but the balance fluctuated for a long period between them: and when at last the scale fell in favour of the Saxon, and the descendants of Cerdic won the supremacy which gave to the united realm her line of kings, the influence of the rival race was still strong enough to bestow upon this realm the name of England. For though Wessex and Mercia had their limits well defined on the east by the territories which Jutes, East and South Saxons, and East Angles had occupied, yet both were entirely undefined on the west, and were at liberty to make whatever encroachments might be possible in the direction of their British neighbours. Wessex would send forth its colonies of settlers, whence came the Wiltsætas, the Dorsætas and the Somersætas, gradually occupying the chief part of the south-western district. The Angle also was coalescing with the Briton in the midland district, which thus became known as Mercia, the mark-land, or borderland, lying along the frontier of Wales and covering the broad central portion of the country. Here was a wide field, therefore, of untouched soil offering itself for the labour of a Christian missionary.

A fifth archbishop had now come to the throne of Canterbury. Augustine, just before his death in 604, had consecrated his companion Laurence as his successor. Mellitus, lately driven from London, had succeeded him in 619. Justus of Rochester, who had returned thither after some years of expulsion, was next raised to the primatial see in 624, and held it for three years. In 628 Honorius had been sent from Rome, and was consecrated to Canterbury at Lincoln by

C

Paulinus immediately before the enforced departure of that prelate from York. It was from this Honorius that Felix had received his commission to found the East Anglian Church. But Canterbury had not yet become a centre of strength from which any forces of evangelisation could issue uninvited.

The providence of God meanwhile was providing the man whom Wessëx and Mercia needed. His name was Berin, commonly latinised as Birinus. He was sent from Rome to preach Christianity in the innermost parts of England; and he came, as far as we know, quite independently of the existing English churches, being commissioned directly from Pope Honorius I. as if to an entirely foreign country. It was in 634, the year after the Christian Edwin of Northumbria was slain and the church which Paulinus founded was apparently destroyed. But from that quarter, where all seemed darkest, the efforts of the new missionary were to be speedily aided by a new Christian influence. For after reigns of only a few months the two pagan successors of Edwin met their deaths, and a reunited Northumbria accepted as its king the saintly Oswald. He had kept the faith which he had learned from the monks of Iona while he was an exile in Scotland during the reign of Edwin; hence his first care was to seek from the same source the teachers who should instruct his people; and thus he brought St. Aidan to Lindisfarne.

In order to make our view of the situation complete, we must recollect that all along the western side of the land, in the kingdom of Strathclyde, in Wales and the Welsh borderland, and in the whole of the Damnonian promontory, the British Church still held its ground.

It was in the midst of these surroundings that the mission of St. Berin was to have its beginning: backed on the east by the church of St. Augustine's foundation and by the more recent mission of St. Felix; looking northward in the direction of the Northumbrian church which St. Aidan was about to revive from a Scottish stock; and stretching westward to meet the primitive church of the British race.

We may now take the passage in which Venerable Bede describes the saint's life and work. It follows immediately upon his narrative of the accession of St. Oswald to the Northumbrian throne, and is contained in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, Book III., chap. vii.

"At that time the nation of the West Saxons, who in old time were called the Gewissæ, received the faith of Christ in the reign of Cynegils, when blessed Birin preached the Word to them. He had come to Britain with the advice of Pope Honorius, in whose presence he promised to sow the seeds of the holy faith in the innermost parts beyond those of the English, where no teacher had gone before him. Wherefore also, by order of the same pontiff, he was consecrated to the rank of the episcopate by Asterius, bishop of Genoa. But arriving in Britain, and entering first the nation of the Gewissæ, when he found all the people there to be extreme pagans (*paganissimos*), he deemed it to be more profitable to preach the Word there, rather than to proceed further and seek for those to whom he ought to preach. Therefore while he was evangelising in the aforesaid province, when the king himself was instructed and together with his people was washed in the font of baptism, it happened that at that time the most holy and victorious king of the Northumbrians, Oswald, was present and received him as he came forth from the laver; so that, by a most beauti-

ful and a God-worthy alliance, the man whose daughter he was about to take to wife he first took as his own son, dedicated in second birth to God. And both the kings gave to the bishop the city which is called Dorcic, to make there his episcopal see ; where, after churches had been built and dedicated and many peoples had been called to the Lord by his pious labour, he departed to the Lord and was buried in the same city. And after many years, when Hedde held the bishopric, he was translated thence to the city of Wenta, and was laid in the church of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul."

One inaccuracy has been noted in this account ; for Asterius, the consecrator of St. Berin, was not bishop of Genoa, but resided there and held the see of Milan ;¹ and the mistake is omitted in the English version, which merely says that "the Pope had him hallowed bishop and sent him to Britain." We may compare a similar error in Bede's notice of St. Augustine's consecration at Arles, which he states to have been performed "by Aetherius, archbishop of that city," confusing Vergilius, archbishop of Arles, with the contemporary Aetherius, archbishop of Lyons.² But if such instances as these show that Bede's information relating to the affairs of distant churches was sometimes imperfect, they serve also to illustrate the general accuracy and trustworthiness of his narrative and the pains that he must have taken in compiling it.

Bede only makes one subsequent mention of St. Birin. In Book IV., chapter xii., he writes :—

"The fourth prelate of the West Saxons was Hlothere

¹ Bright, *Early English Church History*, p. 168.

² Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*, I. xxvii. See Bright, *Early Engl. Ch. Hist.*, p. 60.

(*Leutherius*); for Birin (*Birinus*) was the first, *Ægelberht* (*Agilberctus*) the second, and Wini the third."

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle has four passages in which St. Birin is mentioned. In the oldest copy, which appears to have been written at Winchester in 891, they are these :

"634. This year Birinus preached Baptism to the West Saxons."

"635. This year Cynegils was baptised by Birinus the bishop at Dorceceastre and Oswald received him [as godson]."

"639. This year Birinus baptised Cuthred at Dorceceastre and received him as his son."

"650. This year *Ægylbryht* of Gaul, after Birine the Roman bishop, received the bishopric of the West Saxons."

A Ms. of the twelfth century, in the Cottonian Collection, gives the last entry thus :

"This year Birinus the bishop died, and *Ægebert* the Frenchman was consecrated."

The date of St. Birin's coming may be gathered from Bede. In the passage already quoted he says it was "at that time," when St. Oswald was restoring the Christian faith in the Northumbrian kingdom and when St. Aidan was sent there as bishop, as the preceding chapters had related it. In a later chapter of the same book (III. xxvi.) he tells us that the Synod of Whitby, which determined the time of keeping the Easter festival, was held "in the year of the Lord's Incarnation 664"; and he adds that "it was the thirtieth year of the episcopate of the Scots which they maintained in the province of the English ;

for Aidan held the episcopate seventeen years, Finan ten, and Colman three years." Hence the coming of St. Aidan was in 634. Bede has also told us (III. i.) that the year of the two apostate kings who succeeded Edwin was reckoned as being the first year of Oswald. Accordingly the events are grouped together under the year 634 in one copy of the Saxon Chronicle. Archbishop Laud's Ms., which appears to have been written in 1122, and to have belonged to Peterborough, amplifies thus the first of the brief entries already given :

"634. This year Osric, whom Paulinus had before baptised, succeeded to the kingdom of Deira. He was son of Elfric, Edwin's uncle. And to Bernicia succeeded Ethelfrith's son, Eanfrith. And also this year Birinus first preached baptism to the West Saxons under King Cynegils. This Birinus came thither by pope Honorius' word, and he there was bishop unto his life's end. And Oswald also this year succeeded to the Northumbrians' kingdom, and he reigned nine winters. Men reckoned the ninth to him because of the 'heathenship' which those wrought who had reigned over them one year between him and Edwin."

The Chronicle goes on to record the Baptism of the king under the next year, and Florence of Worcester gives the same dates. Wendover summarises the events, mentioning the mission of St. Berin and his consecration, as well as the king's Baptism and the foundation of the West Saxon bishopric, all under the year 635 ; and Rudborne follows him in this. Some chroniclers, however, have confused the date. Malmesbury says that the year of St. Berin's coming was "the fortieth year after the coming of Augustine," thus making it 636. On the other

hand, Diceto, followed by some less important chroniclers (as those of Bury St. Edmund's¹ and of Dunstable² in the earlier half of the thirteenth century), gives 633 as the year of St. Berin's coming and of Cynegils' conversion. It would seem that the date became confused by some chronicler setting the events of 634 and 635 together under one year, and later copyists, attempting to disconnect them, fell into error on one side or the other. We need not hesitate, therefore, to accept the dates in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as accurate. And accordingly the writer of the Bodleian Ms. (Digby, 39) in the twelfth century, giving the life of the saint and prefixing to it the passage from Bede, correctly inserts a note upon the opening words: "*at that time*: that is, in the year of our Lord's Incarnation the 634th:" though, by an erroneous calculation, he adds that it was the 39th year after the coming of St. Augustine.

The Life in Capgrave's Collection says that "in the 38th year after St. Augustine's arrival in England, St. Birin began to preach to the West Saxons and to baptise;" confusing the year of St. Augustine's arrival, 597, with the year of his mission from Rome, 596. But the same passage proceeds to date St. Berin's settlement at Dorchester correctly: "in the year of our Lord 635."

It will be convenient to insert here the metrical passages from Aelfric's Homily and from Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle, which have been already mentioned. They add little to the information which we get from Bede; but they are in themselves both curious and interesting.

¹ In Liebermann's *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen*, p. 118.

² *Ann. Monast.* (Rolls Series, 36), Vol. III., p. 7.

The lines of Aelfric, rendered into modern English with as little variation from the original words as possible, are as follows :¹

At the same time came also a bishop
 From Rome-city, Birinus named,
 To the West-Saxons' king, Cynegyls named,
 He was yet heathen, and all West-Saxons' land.
 Birinus indeed came from Rome
 By the pope's rede, who then at Rome was,
 And promised that he would God's will perform,
 And preach to the heathen the Saviour's name
 And the true faith in far lands.
 Then came he to Wessex, that was yet heathen,
 And turned the king Kynegyls to God,
 And all his people to faith with him.
 It happened then that the faithful Oswold,
 The Northumbrians' king, was come to Cynegyls,
 And him to baptism took, fain of his conversion.
 Then gave the kings, Cynegyls and Oswold,
 To the holy Birine for his bishop-stool
 The city of Dorcanceaster, and he therein dwelt,
 God's praise exalting, and right-guiding
 That folk with his lore to faith for long time,
 Until that he happily departed to Christ.
 And his body was buried in that same city,
 Until that bishop Hædde afterward bore his bones
 To Wintanceastre, and with honour laid
 In the old minster, where men honour them yet.

The passage from the Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, composed in the reign of Edward I., is given here according to the text of a Ms. belonging to Trinity College at Cambridge. This Ms. was written about the year 1400, but shows evidence of having been carefully copied from one of earlier date.²

“Seint berin the bissop. an holi mon that was.
 To this lond. thoru the pope hono[ry] y-send was.
 To turne the king of west sex. kingill, to cristendom.

¹ See above, p. xiv.

² *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, ed. by Wm. Aldis Wright (Rolls Series, 68), pp. xliii, 360.

And that lond of west sex. into this lond he com.
Sein berin him to cristendom. turnde thoru godes grace.
And as god wolde seint oswald. was in thulke place.
And of the holi fonston. this grete king nome.
And is godfader was. on is cristendom.¹
Seint oswald and this other king. thoru ure louerdes grace.
Purveyde seint berin. to is wille a place.
That derchestre is icleped. that biside oxenford is.
All ase in the este south. seve mile y wis.
There seint berin bissop was. the verste² that was y wis.
Vor the se that ther was tho. lincolne nou heo is.
There he deyde and there he lay. vort suththe ther after longe.
He was to winchestere y-lad. as he is yut avonge."³

¹ And from the holy font-stone this great king took, and his god-father was at his christening.

² first.

³ For the see that there was then, Lincoln now it is. There he died and there he lay, until since thereafter long, He was to Winchester led, as he yet is kept.

CHAPTER II

ST. BERIN'S NAME AND ORIGIN

“Cum simulacrorum cultus exuta prophanos
Roma Deum coleret, in se gavisa recenter
Catholicam florere fidem, puer inde sereno
Nascitur auspicio Birinus, mente benignus,
Ore decens, patria felix, et origine clarus;
Ut quem commendat pia mens illuminet oris
Forma nitens, autenticet urbs, sublimet origo.
Ecce labor vester, vestræ plantacio dextræ,
Quomodo fructificet, Petre princeps, Paule magister
Ecclesiæ ! Jam de fidei pinguedine vestræ
Hic est exortus palmes frondentis olivæ.
Vos nectar, mons, lux ; hic stilla, columpna, lucerna.
Hæc expressa sapit de vestro nectare stilla ;
Hæc excisa riget de vestro monte columpna ;
Hæc accensa micat de vestra luce lucerna.”

Alexander Essebiensis, 42-56.

SINCE the name of the saint has been variously written, it will be well at the outset to inquire what was the true form of it. There is in Oxfordshire a very definite tradition of it in the name of *Berin's Hill* at Ipsden, on the western front of the Chilterns, in a district which seems to have been connected from the first with the Dorchester bishopric. And the name is latinised in this form, *Berinus*, on glass of the twelfth century in Dorchester Abbey. Thus also the French rhyming Chronicle of Geoffrey Gaimar, apparently composed in the middle of the twelfth century, relating the Baptism of

Cynegils, says that "the man who baptised him had the name *Berin*."

"Berin out nun kil baptizad."¹

And in a manuscript written about 1305-1310, in the Harleian Collection at the British Museum (No. 2277), containing lives of saints in English verse, there is a Life of St. Swithin which mentions the name of "Seint Beryn" and afterwards "Seint Berin."² This form of the name is also illustrated by the *Tale of Beryn*, a metrical romance by a monk of Canterbury, based upon a French original, describing the adventures of a spoilt child of a Roman senator in the reign of Augustinus the son of Constantine. It is contained in a manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* belonging to the Duke of Northumberland, and is nearly contemporary with Chaucer.³ The hero's name usually appears as Beryn, but occasionally as Berinus.

The name of the saint is also *Berin* in the four places where it occurs in the valuable and interesting manuscript of Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle of which the text has already been given; though the other copies of this Chronicle have *Birin*. And in the English Metrical Life of the Saint, where the name occurs eighteen times, the Trinity College manuscript has once *Berin* and elsewhere always *Beryn*, while the other manuscripts vary it, *Biryn*, *Byrin*, *Birrin*.

The Itinerary of William Botoner, commonly called William of Worcester, gives an account of a journey from Bristol through Cornwall in 1478; and among various

¹ Berin avait nom qui le baptisait.

² Furnivall's *Early Engl. Poems*, etc. (Philolog. Soc.), p. 43.

³ Furnivall's *Tale of Beryn* (Chaucer Society, 1876). See Part II., pp. vii, viii.

documents transcribed at the places which he visited, there is a Calendar of the Church of St. Michael's Mount, proved by its contents to be a Cornish document, in which the festival of the Translation *Sancti Berini* is marked.¹

In the *New Chronicles of England and France*, by Robert Fabyan, an alderman of London, first published in 1516, we have *Berinus* four times, and once *Beryne*. *Berinus* also is twice named by Polydore Vergil, who wrote his *Anglica Historia* in London and published it in 1534; and the same form is preserved in an English translation of this work made at the same period: for here, as also in Fabyan's Chronicle, the English names generally bear latinised forms, as Cyngilsus or Cinigillus, and others. This also was the form known to John Bale, a native of Suffolk, whose account of the saint in his *Scriptorum Illustrium Majoris Britanniae Catalogus* always has *Berinus* (his work being in Latin); though in another place, under a notice of Benedict Biscop, he writes *Birinus*.² Foxe also, in his *Acts and Monuments*, writes the name indifferently as *Berinus* and *Birinus*.³ The *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica* of Nicholas Harpsfeld, who was Archdeacon of Canterbury next after Edmund Cranmer, the Archbishop's brother, and whose work was published at Douay in 1612, always has *Berinus*, and in Speed's *History of Great Britaine*, published in 1611, it is always *Berinus*, and in the index it is *Berin*.

In Bede the name commonly appears as *Birinus*, but

¹ *Itineraria Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre* (ed. J. Nasmith, 1778), p. 129.

² Ed. 1557, ff. 83, 117.

³ Ed. 1570, pp. 163-166.

he only writes it twice ; and of the four oldest Mss., all belonging to the eighth century, one in the Cottonian Collection (Tiberius C. ii.) gives the name in one place as *Berinus* (*prædicante Berino*, III. vii.), though afterwards (IV. xii.) it is *Birinus*. This Ms. is described by Mr. Plummer as "certainly a Durham book, possibly brought originally from Lindisfarne";¹ while the three others appear to have been written on the Continent.

Birinus, however (frequently varied as *Byrinus*, *Birynus*, and *Byrynus*), as distinguished from *Berinus*, is the form which is followed by the great majority of subsequent writers. Probably the earliest instance after Bede is in a very valuable manuscript in the Bodleian Library (Digby, 63), which is thought to have belonged originally to Canterbury, but which passed to Winchester at a very early date. It contains rules about the kalendar and documents relating to the time of keeping Easter, with a direction for telling the year of the Christian era which seems to prove that it was written in 867 ; and it has a kalendar commemorating "S. Birinus."

The Saxon Chronicle, of which the earlier part is largely based on Bede, has both *Birinus* and *Birine*, just as it has Augustinus and Augustine, Paulinus and Pauline, Aidanus and Aidan. But it always has *Birinus* as nominative and *Birine* in the inflected cases. In one passage, recording the Baptism of Cynegils, where the oldest copies say that he "was baptised by Birinus" (*was gefulod fram Birino*), the twelfth-century copies correct it to *Birine*. Ælfric's *Homily* follows the same usage as the Chronicle, saying first that "Birinus came from Rome,"

¹ Plummer, *Ven. Bede Hist.*, I., p. xciii.

and afterwards that "the kings gave Dorchester to the holy Birine."

It was impossible that the writers of that day should be sufficiently learned in the Latin tongue to discriminate between names that are properly Latin and those that are of foreign origin ; hence it is not surprising that the Latin form *Birinus* is retained in both places by the Saxon translator of Bede's History. Similarly Trevisa, the contemporary translator of Higden's *Polychronicon* in the fourteenth century, makes no attempt to discriminate, but writes Birinus just as he writes also Kingilsus and other English names.

But with these exceptions the mediæval authors who write in English have *Birin* (varied as *Byrin*, *Biryn*, or *Byryn*) with or without the final *e*. A charter, purporting to be by Ethelwulf who reigned in Wessex 834 to 857, refers to a grant of land which Kynegils made to his baptism-father, "*his fulluht-fæder sancte Birine biscope*." And this form of the name, variously spelt, is used—as was noticed before—in most copies of Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle and in most also of the Metrical Life. Similarly it is *Byryn* and *Birine* in Capgrave's Chronicle of England, dedicated to Edward IV. ; and the anonymous translator of Higden's *Polychronicon* in the time of Henry VI. uses the English form seven times, but keeps the Latin form once.

Again, there is the Irish *Martyrology of Gorman*, compiled in verse about 1170 by Maire hua Gormáin, who was abbot of a monastery of Austin canons at Knock near Louth, in which the name *Birin* twice appears.¹

¹ Stokes, *Martyrology of Gorman* (Hen. Bradshaw Soc.), pp 170, 230. See pp. xviii, xix.

From this it was copied also into the *Martyrology of Donegal*, the compilation of a Franciscan friar of that place about 1630, where it appears as *Birin* in one place and in another place is shortened, apparently by accident, to *Birn*.¹ Also in the Anglo-French Chronicle, *Le Livre de Reis de Brittanie*, probably written about 1274, the year at which it ends, "Seint Birin" is twice mentioned.² Again, we have *Birine* and *Byryne* in the translation of Capgrave's *Nova Legenda*, printed by Pynson in 1516. Leland also, who was chaplain to Henry VIII., wrote *Birine*.³ And Richard Whytford, whose *Martiloge in Englysshe* was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1526, gives the two feasts of "Saynt Byryne"; but this is not remarkable, since he drops Latin endings almost invariably, and has "Tyte," "Ruf," "Clawdy."⁴

Thus we find that while the name, whether Berin or Birin, was latinised in the usual way by those who wrote in Latin, it was treated as an English name by the majority of the older writers in English, and also in French and Irish.

Lastly, in some documents of the time of Henry VIII. regarding the grant of Dorchester Abbey and its possessions to Edmund Ashfield, we read several times of "the oblations of St. Buryan,"⁵ which would appear to be an error for St. Berin, possibly due in the first instance to a scribe who was more familiar with the Cornish name of St. Buryan than with the ecclesiastical history of

¹ Todd, *Martyrology of Donegal*, pp. 325, 366.

² Rolls Series, 42, pp. 44, 46.

³ Leland's *Itinerary* (ed. Hearne, 1711), Vol. II., p. 9.

⁴ See in Messrs. Procter and Dewick's reprint (Henry Bradshaw Soc., 1893), pp. 4, 140, 187, 195.

⁵ Addington's *Dorchester*, pp. 169-172.

Wessex. We may compare with this the fact that the Bodleian Ms. of Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle has in one place "Seint *Burine*."

From the facts before us we get perhaps an equal weight of authority for each of the two forms in which the saint's name appears. On the one hand there is the Oxfordshire tradition, endorsed by the testimony of a very important minority of writers, throughout the entire breadth of Southern England, who write *Berin*. On the other hand we have the authority of most copies of Bede, followed by the majority of historians, whether writing in Latin or in English, for the form *Birin*. Perhaps we must take it to be a dialectic variation; as when Bede mentions "*Cælin*, king of the West Saxons, who is called in their tongue *Ceaulin*,"¹ and again "*Venta*, which is called by the Saxons *Vintan-cæstir*,"² thus distinguishing between the language of the Northumbrian Angles and that of the Saxons. It is possible that in the same way the Saxons called the saint *Berin* and it became *Birin* in the tongue which was familiar to Bede. Or perhaps through some accident the form in which Bede received the name, if it was *Birin*, was merely an error, which thus became perpetuated; for since his work was the basis of all English history, the form which he seems to have used was accepted by the majority of annalists both at Winchester and elsewhere.

While, therefore, the name *Berin*, which is traditional in the district where he lived, seems the fitting form to adopt in these pages, it is convenient, for the sake of greater accuracy, to retain the other form, *Birin*, in quoting from the writers who have used it.

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, II. 5.

² *Ibid.*, III. 7.

And here it may be allowable to express some regret that our Church historians have so generally adopted the latinised form, for Birinus is as meaningless in English as Edwinus. Probably the recollection of his mission from Rome, connecting him with the Latin Augustinus, has led people generally to treat his name also as Latin; but while Augustine is Augustinus anglicised, Birinus on the other hand is Birin latinised. At the same time the fact that he bears a name which seems to be Teutonic, and is certainly not Latin, cannot lessen the debt which England owes to Rome on account of his mission, whatever additional interest it may give to his mission in the minds of Englishmen.

We have mention of another "Birine," whom we may suppose to have been named after the saint, in the eighth century. In a letter sent by King Cenulf of Mercia to Pope Leo III. in 798, and recorded by Malmesbury,¹ the king writes in his own name and that of his bishops and ealdormen in favour of abolishing the metropolitan jurisdiction of the see of Lichfield and bringing it again into the Province of Canterbury; and he ends with conveying a hundred and twenty marks to the pope "by presbyter Birine" (*per Birine presbyterum*) and others. In the pope's reply, preserved in a Ms. of the Cottonian Collection, the name appears as "Bryne."² Here we have the English form of the name in Latin documents, proving, if proof were needed, that at that period it was regarded as English, or at any rate not Latin.

The name, therefore, is most probably Teutonic, and the same that becomes in the Scandinavian form Biörn,

¹ *Gesta Regum*, I. 88.

² Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, etc., III. 523.

and in German Behring.¹ It is presumably derived from some hero who assumed or accepted, after the fashion of the age, the designation of the Bear. Berin, in fact, may very probably be rendered the Son of the Bear.

It is interesting to note that the same name, in a varied shape, belongs to the old Yorkshire family from which Archbishop Benson sprang; for that family claims to be of Scandinavian descent, the original form of the name being Björnson.² And in the form Björn, or Bier-n (with *n* genitive), we perhaps have a clue to the doubtful orthography of the first syllable, according as different dialects simplified it to an *i* or an *e*.

One more illustration is worthy of notice, if the word is rightly interpreted. In the district to which St. Berin came, a chieftain bearing, as it seems, the name of "the Bear" had already set his mark; for the hill-fortress of Barbury, on the front of the Wiltshire Downs, appears to be the Beran-byrig, the burh of Ber or Bera,³ of the Saxon Chronicle, where the Britons were defeated by Cynric and Ceawlin in 556.

St. Berin's name, therefore, suggests that he sprang from one of those Teutonic races which now for two or three centuries had been pouring in large numbers across the Alps into the attractive lands of Italy; and since his history shows that he came from Lombardy,⁴ we may fairly infer that he was a Lombard. The Langobardi had invaded the peninsula far back in the previous

¹ "Probably Bjorn or Bærin or Berin, a compound expressive of Bear in some form, High or Low German." Baring-Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, December, p. 17.

² *Life of Abp. Benson*, by his son, Vol. I., p. 1.

³ Parker, *Early History of Oxford*, p. 80.

⁴ Bp. of Bristol, in *Guardian*, Nov. 3, 1897.

century. They took their origin from the banks of the Elbe, and were probably known as the men of the "long bord" of the river, though their appellation was interpreted by old writers to mean the "long-bearded" men, and by others the "long-speared." From the thirteenth century it has been converted into Lombardi.¹ They had been invited by Justinian to occupy the district between the Danube and the Alps, where the Gepidæ had become dangerous; and the emperor's weakness soon brought its natural consequence, as the new-comers looked with covetous eyes over the fertile plains beyond the mountains. In 567 their young king Alboin led them across the Julian Alps into the land which the emperor had recently recovered from the Ostrogoths, and which was now to be wrested from him again and to bear henceforth the name of Lombardy. In the enfeebled condition of the Empire there was none to offer resistance, and in five months from their start the invaders had occupied Milan. Thence the clergy and nobles fled to the sea-port of Genoa, where the hills protected them on the north and the sea offered an escape southward. The neighbouring city of Ticinum, the Pavia of later times, held out for awhile; but three years later it had become the capital of the Lombardic kingdom of Italy.² Eventually all the most valuable portions of the peninsula belonged to that kingdom, while the imperial power was represented by the Exarchate of Ravenna with its three dependent provinces of Rome, Venice and Naples. These must speedily have passed to the invader, had not the progress of

¹ Gibbon, *Roman Empire*, c. xlii., V. 165, 166, and Smith's note.

² Gibbon, c. xlv., V. 338.

events been arrested by the "Papal Peace" of 599. Agilulf, the Lombard king, was not eager to prolong the struggle, and as he ceased to enforce the Arianism which his nation professed, the religious barrier was passing away. His queen Theodelinda was a Catholic, and of marked piety. It was an opportunity of which Gregory the Great was studious to avail himself, and his influence brought about a cessation of hostilities under the famous treaty. It had indeed the effect of deferring for twelve centuries the unification of Italy, and the old rivalry was destined to break out again as a result of the partition of the land; but in the meantime the Latin was enabled to live side by side with the Lombard.

All that we know of St. Berin points to the conclusion that he belonged to the able and enterprising race which had thus taken a prominent position among the nations of Europe, and which afterwards gave to the English Church a Lanfranc and an Anselm. It is true that in his days the Lombards as a nation were still Arian; but now for more than forty years the faith of Nicæa had been tolerated among them, and had made good progress under the queen's influence, so that there is no difficulty in supposing that St. Berin was one of those who professed it.

Though Bede tells us nothing of St. Berin's origin, there are some points in his account which perhaps have an indirect bearing on the subject. First, it seems to be implied that the saint's mission to England was undertaken at his own suggestion, "with the advice of Pope Honorius," or "after taking counsel" with him (*cum consilio papæ*); and this in marked contrast with Bede's next statement, that he was consecrated by Asterius "by

command of the pope" (*jussu ejusdem pontificis*), though the counsel also is often converted into a command by later writers. The Latin prelate may well have desired, as Gregory did before him, to evangelise the English; but in this case the proposal would come fitly from the missionary himself, if he was bound to them by a sense of kinship in the family of nations.

Secondly, Bede certainly implies that St. Berin's consecration to the episcopate took place at Genoa after he had started upon his mission. We are told that in the presence of Honorius he made the promise of his work, and by that pontiff's order he was consecrated by Asterius, and finally he arrived in Britain. Goscelin's Life, magnifying the saint's connection with Rome at every opportunity, tells us that the pope "raised him to the office of the episcopate through Asterius, bishop of Genoa, who was at that time with him"; thus implying that the consecration took place at Rome; and the Jervaulx Chronicler follows this. But it is of course mere fiction. Matthew Paris seems clearly to understand that he was consecrated on his way. And Malmesbury is still clearer:

"At the exhortation of Pope Honorius, Birin undertook the duty of preaching in Britain; and being ordained bishop by Asterius, bishop of Genoa, he proceeded to the sea where he should pass over into Britain."

There can be little doubt that this is Bede's meaning. Then it should be remembered that Augustine came to Kent a presbyter, and was not to become a bishop till his mission was established, when, in accordance with Pope Gregory's arrangement, he crossed to Arles for

consecration.¹ On the other hand Honorius of Canterbury, commissioned by the same Pope Honorius who three years later sent St. Berin, was consecrated by Paulinus of York at Lincoln.² When we find, therefore, that St. Berin was consecrated neither in Rome nor in Britain, but at Genoa upon his way, the most natural explanation seems to be that he was either a native of the district or had some special connection with it.³ From Bede's words it would seem that he had been a zealous worker, and was known as such to Honorius, and we may infer, perhaps, that he had laboured at Genoa under Asterius. The Hyde Chronicler calls him simply "a Genoese bishop" (*Januensis episcopus*).⁴

And, lastly, it may be noted that whereas St. Augustine and his companions took with them some Franks as interpreters,⁵ there is nothing to indicate that St. Berin needed similar aid. The similarity of language among the various branches of the Teutonic stock at this period was close enough for Franks to serve Augustine's purpose among the Jutes of Kent. Kemble calls St. Berin himself "a Frank";⁶ for which there is no evidence. But if he was a Lombard he would need no lengthened study⁷ to make himself understood to the English. And since Genoa was a mart at which the nations of Northern Europe gathered in large numbers, we may suppose that travellers from England would be found among them. It may well have happened that as English boys in the slave-market at Rome had attracted the notice of St.

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, I. 27.

² *Ibid.*, II. 18.

³ W. H. Jones, *Dioc. Hist. Salisbury*, p. 21.

⁴ *Liber de Hyda*, c. vi., p. 12.

⁵ Bede, *H. E.*, I. xxv.

⁶ *Saxons in England*, Vol. II., p. 362 (ed. 1849).

⁷ Compare Milner, *Hist. Winchester*, I., p. 88.

Gregory, so the sight of English merchants at the port of Genoa may have suggested his enterprise to the missionary spirit of St. Berin.

There is, indeed, a possibility that St. Berin may have been one of the Irish missionaries who were frequently to be found on the continent of Europe at this period, and that his name may have been Beran or Berach, latinised as Berinus, and thence anglicised as Berin; but of this there is no positive probability.

If, then, it is a Teutonic name, and is rightly interpreted as "Son of the Bear," implying that the saint was descended from a warrior ancestor, it may give some colour to the statement in the Breviary Lection that he was "sprung from a noble stock" (*ex nobili prosapia ortus*). But the accompanying statement that he was born at Rome will not bear examination. The Saxon Chronicle calls him a "Roman bishop," but merely in contrast with his successor; "Ægylbryht of Gaul took the bishopric of the West Saxons," it says, "*æfter Birine tham Romaniscan biscope*." William of Malmesbury writes, "it is doubtful whence he sprung" (*dubium unde oriundus*). Elmham implies that he had searched in vain: "I have not read in the Chronicles whence he sprung." The Jervaulx Chronicler, following the Lection, describes him as "a presbyter, a native of the city of Rome." The Hyde Chronicler repeatedly calls him a monk, and Rudborne goes more into detail, calling him "an illustrious doctor and a monk of the Order of St. Benedict, who took the monastic habit in the monastery of St. Andrew at Rome which Blessed Gregory had built."¹ But this statement, written eight

¹ *Hist. Winton.*, II. ii. (Angl. Sacra, p. 190).

centuries after the event and unsupported by any other writer, must be attributed to the natural desire of a monk of Winchester to magnify his own order by connecting it with the founder of the West Saxon church, and to set him also on an equality with St. Augustine by bringing him from the same famous monastery.

It will be well to insert here the first portion of the Lection from the York Breviary.

“The Blessed Confessor Birin, born at Rome of noble stock, sought the adornments of pious and religious conduct; therefore, when the report of so great a man was brought before the supreme pontiff Honorius, he was invited by him and brought into his presence; and he raised him to the office of the episcopate, commanding him to go to Britain and preach the Word of the faith.”

And some passages from the opening clauses of the eleventh-century Life will give a specimen of the way in which the writer—Goscelin or another—enlarges upon the words of the Lection:

“He was born at Rome, to become a citizen of the eternal city. He was born at Rome that the dignity of the place might exalt him, as the authority of spiritual life should afterwards commend him. Divine Providence prepared for his birth the place in which it willed that the primacy of all the holy church should be. Rome begat in the birth of the flesh him whom afterwards she should bring forth to the rule of Catholic truth. Rome therefore bore him to the birth of the flesh and of the faith. . . . He was a well-born boy, illustrious indeed by family and more illustrious by virtue and grace; and the more humbly he bound himself to divine duties, the more loftily did he acquire glory and honour from that

service: for to serve God is to reign. . . . Nor by taking pride in his parents' fame did he claim glory for himself; but sought the adornments of pious and religious conduct: for he was calm in countenance, gentle in feeling, prompt in obedience, kind in speech. Sparing to himself, bountiful to the poor, he treasured not a treasure to himself where moth corrupteth and thieves break through and steal, but a treasure of good works that faileth not."

There is much more to the same effect, showing a considerable acquaintance with Holy Scripture; and then an account of the saint's ordination to the priesthood is introduced, before the writer takes up the next words of the Lesson, of "the report of so great a man" reaching Honorius.

The following are the opening lines of the Metrical Life:

"Seint Beryn the Confessor.
 that guod man was y-nough.
 In the ton of Rome was y-bore.
 and to ech guodness drough.¹
 To clannesse² he drough wel yong.
 and to penance al so.
 Ther ynnne he wax so ech day.
 as he myght it do.
 That eche day hadde somdel³ newe.
 that him over spronge.
 And the latter day more and more.
 uer it noght so longe.
 Me thenketh such wexing wer guod.
 who so it myghte do.
 Wyde sprong his guode los.⁴
 and nedes moste⁵ al so.
 To the Pope Oneri.
 that was tho⁶ it sprong.

¹ drew.

⁴ fame.

² cleanness, purity.

⁵ needs must.

³ something.

⁶ then.

The pope him let sone of sende.¹
 er him thoghte long.
 Tho² the guode man to him com.
 he him honourede y-nough.
 And most in his privetes.³
 aboute he him drough.
 So that he made him bischop.
 in the lond ther be syde.
 The los⁴ of his guodnesse.
 gif it er sprong wyde.
 It wax tho more than y-nough.
 aboute fer and nere.
 So that in none londe.
 tho men fond his per.
 Seththe⁵ the pope him understod.
 that he moste send his sonde.⁶
 For to amendy cristendom.
 into Engelande.
 For the folk yut of Engelande.
 ne bylevede noght aright.
 Anon he thoghte saint Beryn.
 to make Godis knyght.
 He sente him in to Engeland.
 to prechy cristendom.
 Saint Beryn a Godis name.
 thuder⁷ the wey nom."⁸

¹ let him soon [be] off-sent.

³ privacy.

⁵ Then.

⁷ thither.

² then.

⁴ praise.

⁶ sending, mission.

⁸ took.

CHAPTER III

THE COMING OF ST. BERIN

"Nam sibi proviso ductore viatica sumit
Aggrediturque viam longinquam : nec mora : septem
Destituit montes urbis, sed climata quinque
Orbis, eo tendens quo nullus pervenit austri
Flatus, sed glacie tellus constricta perhenni,
Cum non parturiat baccas nec proferat uvas.

* * * * *
Decursis ergo multo conamine multis
Terrarum spaciis, jam flava Britannia solo
Prospicitur divisa mari, navisque parata
Expectat fluctus refluos quibus unda redundet."

Alexander Essebiensis, 242-247, 266-269.

OF St. Berin's journey from Genoa, and his crossing into Britain, Bede tells us nothing. We must presume that he went by the same route that Augustine had followed before him, passing along the coast through Provence as far as Arles ; and then, striking northward up the valley of the Rhone and following along the Burgundian border, he would cross the territory of the Franks to their northern coast. As Goscelin's Life expresses it, "he travelled many distances of diverse lands, and came to the sea which he must cross to enter the boundaries of Britain."

He seems, as far as we are told, to have made the journey alone,¹ though it is difficult to believe that he did so, and the brief records do not satisfy us upon

¹ Mason's *Mission of St. Augustine*, p. 196.

the subject. Goscelin's *Life*, indeed, relates that he "received the pope's benediction, prepared his company, took provision for the journey, and, trusting in God's mercy, hastened to fulfil the duty that was enjoined on him": and Rudborne speaks of the "monks of the Order of St. Benedict whom he brought with him to preach the Word of God";¹ which is evidently a reminiscence—whether wilfully inserted or creeping in unconsciously—of the forty companions, monks and choristers and Frankish interpreters, who came with St. Augustine. But authentic history makes no mention of such companions with St. Berin; and the story of the voyage, as told by Malmesbury and by the author of Capgrave's *Life*, certainly shows that these writers believed him to have been travelling without companions. The Winchester Homily of the twelfth century² or earlier expressly speaks of him as "ministering the divine word alone," and contrasts him in this respect with Augustine who "came with many teachers of the Christian faith." The amplified story related in Goscelin's *Life* and in the Jervaulx Chronicle seems to contradict itself on this point, for it says that "when he was about to enter the ship he celebrated the divine mysteries for himself and for those that were with him"; yet afterwards it plainly implies that he was the only Christian in the ship, and when the heathen crew were converted at the sight of his miracle and were baptised, "a deep sleep from God fell upon them, and not one of them remained awake except the bishop alone." Perhaps we must assume that the idea of his having had no companions arose from

¹ *Hist. Maj. Winton.*, Lib. II., cap. ii., in Wharton, p. 190.

² Appendix, Note VII.

Bede having omitted to mention them as he did those of St. Augustine.

Leaving for the present the legend of St. Berin's miracle, which is of sufficient interest to merit some notice hereafter, we may proceed now to the history of his arrival in Britain.

Bede has told us that the saint, in his interview with Honorius, had "promised to sow the seeds of the holy faith in the innermost parts beyond those of the English, where no teacher had gone before him." We must not press too closely the force of these terms as if they necessarily implied the centre of the island beyond the Angles to whom St. Felix had come, for Bede more than once speaks of "the nation of Angles or Saxons"¹ as if they were one. But we learn clearly from the sequel that Berin had intended to proceed inland at once. Very probably the reports of St. Augustine's mission which were prevalent in Rome had led him to expect that all the southern districts of England were Christianised already.² But the history goes on to relate that when he arrived among the Gewissæ and found them to be extreme pagans, "he deemed it to be more profitable to preach the Word there, rather than proceed further and seek for those to whom he ought to preach."

The people to whom he first came in Britain were the Gewissas, latinised by Bede as *Gevissæ*, and they are described just before as "the nation of the West Saxons who were anciently called *Gevissæ*." We are to understand that this designation, which Bede uses several times,

¹ *H. E.*, I. 15, 22.

² Hill, *English Dioceses*, p. 40.

had in his day become antiquated. The Anglo-Saxon version omits it, and only speaks of the "West Saxon people" (*West Seaxna theod*). The term indeed is only found elsewhere in Celtic sources, and Asser, the contemporary of Alfred, speaks of the Britons calling this nation the *Gegwis*.¹ It is interpreted to mean the "Western people," the word being the same that we have in the name Visi-goths, with the characteristic Saxon *ge* prefixed.²

Bede therefore tells us expressly that the saint came first to this nation (*Britanniam perveniens ac primum Gevissorum gentem ingrediens*). We infer that his voyage, either by accident or by design, brought him beyond the limit of the South Saxons' coast and landed him among the West Saxons, probably in the neighbourhood of Southampton; for Wareham, a few miles further west, which was then one of the chief sea-ports in the land, was almost certainly still held by the Britons. But in the legendary life, as in Bromton's Chronicle, we have a long story of the beginnings of his work at the place where he landed, and before he preached to the West Saxons. Alexander of Ashby's verses include a homily of more than a hundred lines in which the saint instructs the people on the nature of God, the creation and the fall, and the work of redemption. The following is the Jervaulx Chronicler's briefer summary of what occurred when the port was reached :

"The man of God tarrying three days preached the faith of the Holy and Undivided Trinity unceasingly to all who were present. And among those who heard him

¹ Asser, *De Rebus Gestis Ælfredi*, in *Mon. Hist. Brit.*, p. 468.

² Plummer's note on Bede, *H. E.*, II. vi. (Vol. II., p. 88).

in that place were many who had been previously converted to the Catholic faith by the preaching of Blessed Augustine."

Then there follows the miraculous healing of a blind and deaf woman, which the shorter Life in Capgrave places after the saint's arrival in Wessex. It will demand a further notice, together with the other miracle.

Is there any appearance of truth in this story of St. Berin landing first among some other nation—which could only be the South Saxons—before entering Wessex? It is of course possible that Bede was misinformed, or misunderstood his informant, about the landing-place. But it is more probable that the story told by these other writers is mythical. It may be noted that both of them, like the brief and early narrative in the York Lection, mention the saint's arrival among the Gewissæ without explaining the term. It looks as if the original compiler of the Life, with this brief narrative before him, mistook the term, and assumed that the Gewissæ were a different people from the West Saxons; and a later writer, expanding the Life into a fuller form, knew from Bede who the Gewissæ were, and corrected that part of the error, but still supposed that the preaching began among another nation.

And again, when the writer of the Life dwells upon the three days which the saint spent at the landing-place, his lengthy comment is of a character which arouses suspicion:

"It is well mentioned that he tarried three days, because the servant of the Holy Trinity preached to them the mystery of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. Fittingly also are days mentioned, not nights; because the

servant of the day, the enemy of darkness, taught them to turn away from the night and to love and serve the day. In the day indeed he was, and in the day he preached. In the day he was; for in all goodness and righteousness and truth, as the apostle says, he faithfully served the Lord. Moreover, He preached by day from Whom is every day and of Whom is every good; for He was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world: but He blamed and condemned the night, since by word and deed He preached that men should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but should awake from sleep and arise from the dead."

When we read of the three days' delay in connection with these surroundings, presently followed by an allusion to the "Victory of Christ," we may suspect that all this was suggested by the thought of the saint's entrance into this land of darkness out of which he was to effect a spiritual resurrection. At any rate the writer of the Life has these thoughts in mind in the scriptural illustrations with which he draws a parallel between the saint and his Lord.

Next follows, as in the Jervaulx Chronicle, the allusion to converts of St. Augustine; and the Life goes on to relate how

"The people rushed in crowds to hear the blessed prelate and the saving admonitions which flowed from his lips; for with the ear both of body and of heart they humbly embraced them. Empty are the cities, desolate the towns. There comes a mighty concourse, and all honour him with joyful attention. All run to the healer, thirsting for health both of body and of soul: they run to the apostolic man, devoutly seeking from him the Word of Life and of eternal salvation."

Then it tells in the same exaggerated style how heathenism is confounded, the idols and their temples fall, their priests deplore the loss of their gains; churches and hospices are built, and the victory of Christ is proclaimed by all; the winter of unbelief is past, and the flowers of righteousness and faith appear on the earth, and the dry ground has become a fruitful field to the great joy of the venerable prelate.

The statement that many were present who had been converted by St. Augustine is repeated in several of these legendary accounts. Thus we have it in the Metrical Life:

“ Moche folk that thorgh seint Austyn.
 y-cristened wer byfore.
 Thikke com aboute him.
 to fastene bet the more.¹
 So that seint Austyn bygan.
 and ne fulfelde noght.
 Thorgh him was to cristendom.
 folliche² to ende y-brought.”

But it can only be regarded as the invention of a writer who assumed that the Kentish mission must necessarily have produced some results in these parts. Similarly William Thorn, a monk of St. Augustine's at Canterbury, relates that after the founding of the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in that city “Augustine with the cultivators of the Lord's field sowed the seed of God's Word everywhere throughout the whole land of the English.”³ “These stories (says Dr. Bright)⁴ grew up out of a desire to make Augustine apostle of all England

¹ *To fasten* (or *secure*) *better the greater number.*

² fully.

³ Twysden's *Decem Scriptores*, col. 1760.

⁴ *Early English Church*, p. 100, note.

in the sense of having preached throughout it ;” and he illustrates this further by “the weird story of the ‘dead-alive’ excommunicate and excommunicator, told by Bromton,” in connection with a journey into Oxfordshire. In this instance the story, which we shall have occasion to notice more fully, refutes itself by telling of an English priest in Oxfordshire in Augustine’s time. We must dismiss as equally improbable the mention of St. Augustine’s converts among St. Berin’s hearers, and we take up the thread of the authentic narrative again where the different writers follow Bede in the account of the saint’s arrival among the Gewissæ.

Whether he tarried three days near the coast or not, we have every reason to believe that he hastened inland without delay. It seems evident that his first purpose was to meet the king, as Augustine when he landed sought at once an interview with Ethelbert. After telling us that he decided not to go beyond the Gewissæ, Bede relates that “while he was preaching the Gospel in the aforesaid province” the king was instructed and baptised. The king of Wessex at this time was Cynegils, a grandson of Cutha the brother of Ceawlin, in whose time the West Saxon dominion had been extended beyond the upper Thames by the victory of a third brother, Cuthwulf; and Cutha was grandson of Cerdic who had first founded that kingdom. The Saxon Chronicle gives the genealogy thus: “Cynegils wæs Ceoling, Ceol Cuthing, Cutha Cynricing,” and in another place, “Cynric Cerdicing.”¹ Cuthwulf, who conquered the district in 571, died the same year; Cutha fell fighting with the Welsh thirteen years later; and Ceawlin, apparently the

¹ A.S. Chron., a° 611 and 674.

eldest of the three brothers, still reigned, until in 591 he was expelled in favour of the son of Cutha, Ceol or Ceolric. Next came Ceolwulf, another son of Cutha, in 597, and finally Cynegils the son of Ceol in 611. So the succession is given in the Chronicle.

In order to find King Cynegils, St. Berin travelled northwards; for at the next point in the history we find that he had crossed the entire breadth of Wessex, and had arrived at Dorchester on the northern bank of the Thames. An attempt has indeed been made in recent times to urge that the Dorchester to which he came was the town of the same name in Dorset, and not the Oxfordshire town where a Mercian bishopric was founded at a later period. But this suggestion may be more conveniently considered when we come to the settlement of St. Berin's See-town. It will be found that the theory has little or nothing to recommend it except the fact that the Dorset town was a few miles nearer to the saint's landing-place. Meanwhile we may follow the universal belief of all the principal historians, that he made his way to the valley of the Thames.

The folk-lore of the district gives us a tradition of his arrival which may be noticed now in passing and examined more fully in connection with similar traditions afterwards. It is said that his first preaching before the king was on an outlying ridge of the Berkshire Downs overlooking the valley of the upper Thames, at a spot which now bears the name of Churn Knob, above the village of Blewbury. And it is a point of some interest that at the foot of these downs, about three miles eastward, is Cholsey—the Ceolsige of Saxon charters—then an “ey” or islet in the marshes near the river, taking its

name from Ceol or Ceolric, the father of Cynegils, which seems to imply that he had a dwelling here. This is the more probable when we note the history of the village; for King Alfred bestowed a hundred manses here upon the church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Winchester;¹ Ethelred the Unready, a century later, gave land here for one of the religious houses which he founded to expiate the assassination of King Edward the Martyr;² and at the present day the moated site is to be seen: in the Domesday Survey the king still held twenty-three hides in "Celsea," as King Edward had held before him: and finally King Henry I. granted the manor to Reading Abbey. It may well have happened that Cynegils and his court were at his vill of Cholsey, and that St. Berin came hither to seek him; and thus it is not unlikely that the neighbouring hill-top may have been agreed upon as a suitable meeting-place.

Some months must then have elapsed since the missionary landed, and of the king's attitude towards him during that period the history is silent. We know nothing of his having either hindered him or aided him. It is possible that he had not heard of him until they met. We may certainly dismiss as worthless the quaint conceits with which Goscelin, or whoever compiled the older Life, pictures the king "breathing the madness of heathenism and raging in the worship of superstition—a cruel beast, a fierce lion, against whom came God's soldier instructed from the word of the Apostle who said, After the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus." If we can infer anything from the sequel, it

¹ Kemble, *Cod. Dipl.*, MLXIX., Vol. V., p. 134.

² Lyson's *Berks.*, p. 262.

is that Cynegils was disposed to look favourably upon the Christian faith, since he appears to have embraced it without delay. He may perhaps have known little of its existence in Kent, and still less of its beginnings in East Anglia, but he cannot have failed to know how Oswald was restoring it zealously in Northumberland, and how the year before he had set up the Cross and made his followers kneel in prayer at Heavenfield when he gained his victory over Ceadwalla and the Welshmen who had slain Edwin.¹ That zeal of Oswald, the Bretwalda whom all the kings of the English recognised as their leader, was a sign of the times which boded well for the advancement of Christianity. All this must have had its influence on Cynegils. We may suppose, too, that after a reign of twenty-four years he was wearied out with his continual warfare,—now with the Britons on the west, now with Edwin of Northumbria, now with Penda and the Mercians,—and thus was ready to give a willing ear to the gospel-message.²

The event is narrated in the Metrical Life in the following lines :

“Seint Beryn into Engelonde.
him drough ferthere more.
In the contreye of Oxenforde.
he prechede godis lore.
Kenylf was the kyng y-hote.³
that was in thulke ende.
To him wente this holyman.
his thoghte to wende.
For hethene man he was tho yut.⁴
he and alle hiis.

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, III. ii.

² See Bright, *Early Engl. Ch.*, p. 169.

³ *Hight*, called.

⁴ *Then yet*.

Seint Beryn him tolde anon.
that he belevede amys.
And preched hem of cristendom.
that hii hem gone withdrawe.¹
And tornde out of mysbeleve.
to our lordis lawe."

¹ [so] *that they began [to] withdraw them[selves].*

CHAPTER IV

THE PLANTING OF THE WEST SAXON CHURCH

“Expletisque satis tribus in sermone diebus,
Genwissos Birinus adit, quos plurimus error
Excecat, nam ficta colunt simulacra, Deumque
Non qui fecit eos sed quem fecere precantur.
Sceptra tenens Kynegilsus ibi rex, immo tyrannus,
Immo leo, quem sacrilegi vesania cultus
Inflat et in cuntos jubet insanire fideles.
Sed Christi pugil intrepidus nichilominus illum
Aggreditur verbi gladio, pugnatque sacerdos
Adversus regem, ne rex vincatur ab hoste.
Pugnat et ecce quidem genus admirabile belli :
Qui nocet inde juvat, qui percutit inde medetur,
Qui cadit inde viget, qui vincitur inde triumphat.
Exterius pugnat Birinus cum Kynegilfo,
Interius Christus cum demone : vincitur autem
Demon, et eripitur Kynegilfus ab illius ungue.
Vir sanctus baptizat eum, gaudetque patronus
Esse renascentis socii rex Berniciorum
Oswaldus, nondum præsens gener, immo futurus.
Ille renatus aqua divinum concipit ignem
Intus, et efficitur de transgressore fidelis,
De tumido suplex, de pervasore patronus.
Nec solus rex ad Dominum convertitur. Immo
Tota sui sequitur regio vestigia regis,
Tota vetustatis errores, tota malignos
Exuitur ritus sacrisque renascitur undis.
O subitum quid agit Deus ! O mutacio dextræ
Excelsi !”¹—*Alexander Essebiensis*, 564–591.

THE next stage of St. Berin's history brings us to the place with which it is henceforth to be chiefly connected.

¹ Psalm lxxvii. (lxxvi.), 10.

The village of Dorchester is some five or six miles northward from Cholsey and Churn Knob where the king and the missionary are said to have met. Its name, like several other place-names hereabouts, retains an original British element, *dor*, which has been commonly taken to be *dwr*, the water, but, according to the latest authorities, it is *dur*, akin to the Latin *durus*, and meaning a stronghold. In Bede it is "the city called Dorcic" (*civitas que vocatur Dorcic*), or "Dorcic-caestra,"¹ and in the Anglo-Saxon version "Dorcot-ceastre";² whence we may perhaps gather that the Saxons called it Dor-gwic³ and Dor-cote, with the usual suffix of *ceastre*, which denoted a fortified town of the Romans. In the Chronicle it is shortened to "Dorce-ceastre." Henry of Huntingdon in the time of Henry I., reckoning it among the famous cities of the Britons, says that they called it Kair-Dauri;⁴ but he may have invented this on the analogy of other names which he enumerates.

The spot and its surroundings are very noteworthy. From the river-bank on the south rise the Wittenham Hills—the ancient "Sinodun"⁵—a double eminence sloping abruptly down to the level on three sides and having one of its summits encircled by a deep entrenchment. Beneath its northern front the Thames makes a bend and then receives the tributary stream of the Thame; and across this bend, from river to river, two lofty banks

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, III. 7; IV. 23.

² Ed. T. Miller (Early Engl. Text Soc.), p. 168; Plummer's note, II. p. 142.

³ W. H. Jones, *Dioc. Hist. Salisbury*, p. 30.

⁴ *Mon. Hist. Brit.*, p. 692.

⁵ Leland, *Comment. in Cygneam Cantionem* (1544), s.v. *Sinodunum*. Gough says (in Camden's *Britannia*, 1789, I., p. 157), "It is vulgarly called Sandown."

of half-a-mile in length are raised side by side ; though a large portion of them has of late years been almost levelled. The broad and deep dyke which they embank was obviously made to carry the water across and so to enclose an artificial island, and at the present day the trench is sometimes flooded. This entrenched island on the north side of the river, with the hill-fortress towering on the other side, must have formed together a position of the highest value for those who had to hold their own against an invader. A few hundred yards north of the dyke is the village of Dorchester, the plan of which shows very clearly the outlines of a Roman encampment, with its cross-streets still discernible, its fortifications well marked on three sides, and the Thame stream protecting its eastern side.¹ The importance of the place both before and during the Roman occupation is proved by the numerous relics which have been discovered here. These include an altar dedicated to Jupiter and the deity of Augustus, more than one tessellated pavement, and various pieces of Samian ware and other pottery. A large urn found near the church contained ashes and two fine vessels of glass which are supposed to have been used for the libations of a funeral ceremony, marking the burial-place of some person of consequence. Coins also have been found in large numbers, chiefly of the third and fourth centuries. One very perfect specimen bears the labarum of Constantine, the Christian emblem. Gold coins of the British Cunobelin, who paid tribute to Augustus, are

¹ Rev. T. Barns, in Parker's *History of Dorchester*, pp. xxxvii-xxxix.

recorded also, and British shields and other weapons have been dug from the river-bed.¹

There is no actual record of events that occurred here under the Roman rule ; but there is good reason to think that this is the spot at which Aulus Plautius and Vespasian gained their first great victory in Britain, repelling the attack of the Catuvellauni who had advanced under their king Caratacus, the son of Cunobelin, from the further end of the Chiltern Hills. The central position of Dorchester, at the meeting of the two rivers and in the midst of a broad valley between the Berkshire Downs and the Chilterns, gave the town an importance which cannot have entirely passed away when it attained its new dignity as the birthplace of the West Saxon Church.

This district, on the eastern side of the upper Thames, became the spoil of the Saxon in 571. In that year, as we have seen, Cuthwulf, the brother of King Ceawlin and of Cutha who was the grandfather of Cynegils, was pushing his conquests into the central parts of the island, and, as the Chronicle relates, he "fought with the Bretwalas at Bedcanford and took four towns, Lygeanbirg and Ægelesbirg, Bensingtun and Egonesham ;" these being obviously the names which the several places had acquired under Saxon rule, as the chronicler knew them, and the older British names being lost. We must understand this account to mean that a decisive victory at Bedford, after the invaders had passed forward along the north-west front of the Chiltern Hills, enabled them to occupy these four towns, the first of which has been variously identified with Limbury near Luton, and with

¹ Parker's *Dorchester*, pp. 11-15, and *Early History of Oxford*, p. 74.

Lenborough near Buckingham, and with Leighton Buzzard,¹ and the second being Aylesbury; after which they passed back southward to Bensington or Benson where the hills meet the river, and finally they proceeded up the river westward, passing Dorchester, which apparently had not retained sufficient importance to be mentioned, and passing Oxford, which was as yet hardly existent, and finishing their raid at Eynsham at the confluence of the Evenlode where they found themselves approaching the hill district which drops eastward from the Cotswolds. The conquerors had thus gained possession of an extensive and fertile plain of triangular form, having its angles marked by the towns which are named—a line drawn across to Eynsham being its northern base and Bensington being its southern apex—the Chilterns forming its border on the south-east and the Thames on the south-west.

One of the most important points, therefore, was Bensington—commonly known in modern times as Benson—lying under the ridge of hills which still continued to afford the Britons a hiding-place. From the time of the Saxon Conquest this village seems to have superseded the old Roman town of Dorchester three miles above it on the Thames. It was at the innermost angle of the newly-acquired territory, where the river is backed by the Chilterns and then by the Berkshire Downs which continue the ridge towards the west. Thus Bensington naturally became a royal vill;² and though we have no further mention of it for two centuries, its subsequent

¹ Parker's *Oxford*, p. 82; Bright, *Early Engl. Church*, p. 29; Green, *Making of England*, pp. 118, 123.

² Ethelwerd and Flor. Wigorn., a° 571.

history proves that its influence had always been maintained. In 777 Cynewulf of Wessex appears to have been here when he and Offa of Mercia "fought about Benesington and Offa took the town," as the Saxon Chronicle relates it. After this there is reason to think that Offa was at least a frequent visitor here, for a tradition noticed in old writers gave to an ancient earthwork on the river-bank the name of "Offa's Palace,"¹ and the church is dedicated to St. Helen, who was the favourite saint of Offa's dedications.² In the reign of King Ethelbald, 857-860, a royal charter was witnessed at this place,³ and throughout the following centuries we find the kings parcelling off portions of the royal manor, and bestowing them upon relatives or upon friends whom they desired to reward. At the time of the Domesday Survey the *Soc*, or jurisdiction, of the three and a half hundreds of the Oxfordshire Chilterns belonged to this manor. The Empress Maud bestowed the church and the tithes of Bensington upon Dorchester Abbey, and her son Henry II. and her grandsons Richard and John confirmed the gift.⁴ Its importance in Edward I.'s time is indicated by the fact that not only the neighbouring churches of Warborough and Nettlebed, but also that of Henley eleven miles away, were chapelries of the mother church of this manor of Bensington.⁵ The manorial rights remained with the sovereign until King Charles I. sold

¹ Boydell's *River Thames* (1794), I., p. 219, quoting Plot's *Oxfordshire*, where, however, it is not mentioned.

² Pearman's *Bensington*, p. 5.

³ *Chron. Monast. de Abingdon* (Rolls Series, 2), Vol. I., p. 40.

⁴ The charter of confirmation is given in Hardy's *Rotuli Chartarum* (1837), Vol. I., Part i., p. 142; and (wrongly as from Madox) in Addington's *Dorchester Church*, p. 89.

⁵ Parker's *Archit. Guide to Neighb. of Oxford*, p. 382.

them to some London speculators,¹ thus bringing to a close a connection with the Crown which had lasted for upwards of a thousand years. There can be little doubt, therefore, that Bensington, the *ton* of a West Saxon tribe called the Bensingas, was the political capital of this district in the time of Cynegils. We have surmised that Cynegils may have been at Cholsey, as the tradition tells us that St. Berin met him at the front of the Berkshire Hills. We may surmise also that he came next to Bensington. At least we are on the sure ground of history when we find him together with the bishop on this side of the Thames in a scene which stands out as one of the great landmarks of our English annals.

Perhaps St. Berin had some knowledge of the coming events, or perhaps the coincidence was what may be called an accident; but the time when he approached King Cynegils was very favourable for his mission. St. Oswald, the Christian king of the Northumbrians, was seeking the hand of Cynegils' daughter in marriage. Among the several kingdoms of England, Wessex was probably the one with which such an alliance would be most desirable from a political point of view. And certainly a more advantageous suitor than the young Bretwalda could nowhere be found for the West Saxon princess. His dignity was no mere empty title, for he was by far the most influential ruler in the land. Bede calls him *sanctissimum ac victoriosissimum regem Northan-Humbrorum*, for his victory was no less famous than his Christianity. Whatever leaning Cynegils may have had towards the new religion, he could hardly fail to have

¹ Pearman's *Bensington*, p. 127.

been influenced by the prospect of such a marriage for his child.

Bede does not mention Dorchester until he presently speaks of it as the place assigned to St. Berin for the seat of his bishopric. But it is reasonable to infer from his account that this was the meeting-place of the two kings. More than one motive may have led to its selection, and in fact it is very doubtful whether any place in England could have been more convenient. Dorchester—as we shall presently have occasion to notice more particularly—was at this period well within the limits of the West Saxon kingdom, and it was near the boundary. Cynegils would certainly desire to advance towards the northernmost point of his realm to meet the powerful Bretwalda. If Oswald came by sea and up the Thames, it may seem strange that the royal vill of Bensington should be passed; but it is much more likely that he came overland, by way of Lincoln and Leicester, and a branch of the Akeman Street from Alchester afforded a direct approach to Dorchester.

It may also be inferred, though again Bede's words do not state it, that St. Berin was present at the meeting of the kings. Possibly Cynegils, knowing Oswald to be a Christian, had taken with him this new teacher who had come to his own realm, that he might have him as an adviser or a mediator. Nor are we told clearly whether Cynegils had been influenced by St. Berin before St. Oswald's arrival. We only know that he was catechised (*catechizatus*), as Bede carefully states, before he was baptised; from which we learn that it was no hasty and unprepared change of religion, but was accompanied with due instruction. Yet this does not imply that he

was being thus prepared before the arrival of Oswald. Bede's words would be quite consistent with the facts if the conversion was only completed after Oswald came and was followed by some brief instruction before the Baptism. And knowing as we do the earnestness of Oswald in the Christian cause, we may well believe that he pressed it upon his future father-in-law. Oswald's biographers, indeed, put his influence before St. Berin's in their account of Cynegils' conversion. Reginald of Durham, writing his *Life of St. Oswald* in the twelfth century, says that Cynegils "yielded to blessed Oswald's admonitions and to the word of St. Birin's preaching." And Drogo, in a later *Life* printed in the *Acta Sanctorum* (August 5), follows his expressions. If these writers, in their enthusiasm for their hero, have exaggerated the part that he took in this matter, we cannot but note the providential ordering by which the coming of the missionary coincided with Oswald's arrival to seek his bride, and we may safely say that the double influence of the bishop and of Oswald led the King of Wessex to the Christian faith.

We could naturally wish to know more of a princess who played so prominent a part in the history of our Church and country. But though she was, however indirectly and unconsciously, the means of bringing St. Berin's mission in Wessex to its successful climax, yet we know almost nothing of her history, and are not even certain of her name. Reginald of Durham calls her Kyneburga;¹ and it is possible that he had it from some record which had preserved it through those five

¹ Appendix III. to *Symeon of Durham* (Rolls Series, 75), cap. xi., p. 349.

hundred years. From Reginald it is doubtless borrowed by the compiler of a Life of St. Oswald in Latin verse which follows the similar Life of St. Birin in the Bodleian manuscript bearing the name of Alexander of Ashby.¹ He describes her thus :

“Nobilis interea Kinekilsī filia regis
Nubere debebat tanto Kineburga marito,
Virgo statu gestuque decens, pietate fideque
Insignis ; sensu sexuque pudica, favore
Blandiciisque placens, vultu cultuque decora.”

But there are coincidences which may throw some doubt upon the genuineness of the name. Since the daughters of the first Christian kings of Kent and Wessex were married to the first two Christian kings of Northumbria, there is a parallel between Ethelburga the daughter of Ethelbert and Cyneburga the daughter of Cynegils, so that this is perhaps the name that would most readily be invented by any writer who was anxious to give the princess a name and could find none forthcoming. On the other hand, the first element of a Saxon name often descended to the children with varied endings. There may also be a confusion with the Cyneburga mentioned by Bede,² who was daughter of Penda, and was married to Alchfrid, the eldest son of Oswald's brother and successor Oswy. She was foundress of a community of nuns at Castor near Peterborough, and is commemorated as a saint, March 6. She had borne a daughter to Alchfrid, named also Cyneburga, who became abbess of Gloucester. But it is by no means improbable that the daughter of Cynegils may have borne the same name as the daughter and granddaughter of Penda.

¹ See above, p. xix.

² *H. E.*, III. 21. See Plummer's note on III. 27, p. 142.

The account of the Baptism of Cynegils is a very remarkable one. St. Oswald "received him as he came forth from the laver." He "took him up" (*suscepisse* in Bede, *onfeng* in the Chronicle), acting as the representative of the faithful who made himself responsible for the admission of this new member among them. It is the usual phrase to denote the sponsor's office. And Bede goes on to point out the double relationship, how Oswald before becoming his son-in-law became first his godfather, calling it "a most beautiful and a god-worthy alliance" (*pulcherrimo prorsus et Deo digno consortio*). The Saxon translation of Bede omits these expressions, and Malmesbury modifies them, calling it "a liberal alliance" (*liberali commercio*). For in later times the Church of Rome looked upon such a double connection as irregular; and hence, we may presume, Ælfric's Homily omits to mention Oswald's marriage in noticing his part in the Baptism; as also does the Breviary Lection; and this example is followed by Florence of Worcester and Diceto, and also by Geoffrey Gaimar and Robert of Gloucester.

The Metrical Life relates the Baptism thus :

"Seint Oswald was tho¹ kyng.
 Of Northomberlonde.
 In the contreye he com tho.¹
 And Beryn ther fonde.
 Of the fontston he nom² the kyng.
 And his godfader by com.³
 His doghter he weddide suththe.⁴
 And to wyve nom."⁵

¹ then.

³ became.

² From the font-stone he took.

⁴ after.

⁵ to wife took.

The writer goes on to apologise for what he regards as an irregularity. "It was a wonder-case," he says :

"When the kyng was his godsone.
His doghter to wedde.
For nou wolde noht holy churche.
Such thyng tholye,¹ y wis.
For God thonked beo.
Cristendom evere the strengere² is."

A document of two centuries later, already noticed,³ speaks of St. Berin as "baptism-father" (*fulluht fæder*) to Cynegils. And when he baptised Cuthred afterwards, we find that he was at the same time his godfather. So here it might seem to imply that he took the part of a second godfather in the case of Cynegils. But in these early times a single sponsor was the rule; and since the story of Cynegils' Baptism was so well known, the writer of the charter can hardly have been ignorant of the fact that Oswald took this office. When therefore he calls St. Berin the "baptism-father," we may suppose that he merely meant the baptiser.

We would gladly know, further, who were admitted to the sacred rite at the same time as the king. In particular, we would ask whether his daughter was among the number. Bede only tells us that Cynegils was baptised "together with his people" (*cum sua gente—mid his theode Westseaxum*). We must infer that on this as on similar occasions a considerable number followed the example of their royal leader. But the phrase may well include some at least of his nearest kinsfolk, as the words

¹ The other copies read *thole* and *soffre*. Compare in *The Lay-folks' Mass Book* (E. E. Text Soc., p. 41): "For me thu tholedest a pyneful dede; as thu suffredest the coroune of thorne."

² stronger.

³ Page xi.

of the Breviary Lection amplify it. The next clauses of the Lection, after those already given,¹ are as follows :

“Therefore, having taken up the work that was enjoined on him, Blessed Birin arrived in Britain, and entering into the entirely pagan land of the Gewisæ he converted to the faith of Christ Kynegils their king, who by the ordering of God’s grace was received by the holy king Oswald from the water of the laver. Moreover, when the king was baptised, his family was baptised also, and the entire province (*ejus familia universaque provincia*).”

We know that his son Cenwalh refused baptism, and Cwichelm also deferred it for a year. But Bede’s account may fairly be taken to imply that the daughter was baptised with her father, and was married to Oswald very shortly afterwards. Malmesburyp utts the Baptism and the marriage on the same day. “The day appointed for the king’s Baptism,” he says, “fell upon the day when he had determined to give his daughter in marriage to Oswald.”

Bede, again, does not actually mention where the Baptism took place. But the Chronicle says definitely that “Cynegils was baptised by Byrine the bishop at Dorchester, and Oswald received him.” The record in its terseness and simplicity reads like an extract from the registers of the bishopric,² from whence it may well have been copied for the chronicler’s use. It is endorsed by Ethelwerd, and also by Gaimar,

“A Dorcecestre fu leved,”

and by the later annalists. A claim, therefore, which has sometimes been made for Blewbury, as the place of

¹ Page 56.

² Parker, *Early History of Oxford*, p. 86.

this Baptism,¹ is evidently a confusion with the tradition of the king having first heard St. Berin's preaching there.

Upon the western bank of the Thame stream stands the abbey church of Dorchester, founded in 1140 for a house of Augustinian canons and carefully renovated as a parish church in modern times, but still preserving in its fabric a large part of the walls of the cathedral church which was erected shortly before the Norman Conquest.² We may confidently believe that it occupies the site of a church, probably of wood, which St. Berin erected here. When Bede goes on to say, in the next passage, that he "built and dedicated churches," the Saxon version renders it, "he wrought and hallowed a church," as if the translator was aware of his having built one particularly at Dorchester; and the Jervaulx Chronicle reads the passage in the same way. It was "a church noble and hey," according to the Metrical Life. Malmesbury also speaks of "the church which he had built at Dorchester." We may infer that there was no edifice of the old British Church remaining here, such as that which was ready to Augustine's hand in St. Martin's at Canterbury, though Berin may well have rebuilt a ruined one. Certainly this was a site of pre-Christian worship; for in digging out the soil for the foundation of a pier in a recent reconstruction, the workmen "dug through a Roman pavement, and underneath found remains of burnt corn and bones, doubtless the relics of a heathen sacrifice."³ And the position on rising ground in the middle of the eastern side of the camp, looking across its boundary-

¹ *Oxford Diocesan Kal.* 1889, p. 171.

² Rev. T. Barns in Parker's *Dorchester* (1882), p. xliii.

³ Report of a Paper read at Dorchester by Mr. J. Oldrid Scott, in *Oxford Times*, June 4, 1886.

towards the sunrise, is one which would suggest itself as most fitting for divine worship to pagans and Christians alike. We may therefore picture here upon the slope, where the lofty east-end of the mediæval choir rises above the river-bank, the scene of this Baptism which brought the king of Wessex and his followers into the fold of Christ.

The writer of a metrical Life of St. Swithin, in the early years of the fourteenth century,¹ has some lines in which he speaks of St. Berin's work as completing St. Augustine's, like a stanza already given from the Metrical Life of St. Berin.² These lines are of sufficient interest to be worth appending. The writer appears to confuse Cynegils with his son Cenwalh, as he calls him—

“ Kenewold the kyng,
That seint Beryn dude³ to cristendom :
in Engelonde furst bringe,
Ac seint Austin hadde before :
to Cristendom ibroght
Athelbright the gode king :
ac⁴ al le londe noght,
Ac siththe⁵ hit was that seint Berin :
her bi weste wende,
And turnde the king Kenewold :
as oure louerd him grace sende.”

¹ Furnivall's *E. E. Poems*. See above, p. 43.

² Page 65.

⁴ *but not all the land.*

³ *did.*

⁵ *but afterwards.*

CHAPTER V

THE SEE-TOWN AT DORCHESTER

“A supradictis donatur regibus illi
Dorchecestrensis urbs, in qua pontificalem
Constituit sedem, spaciumque diocesis amplum
Annectens, phanis destructis templa colenda
Edificat, loliis avulsis lilia plantat,
Ordinibusque sacris personas dotat honestas
Et circumspectas, quos possit habere suorum
Participes operum disciplinaque salubri
Ornet, et optantes paradisi gaudia verbo
Exemploque sui doceat contempnere mundum.”
Alexander Essebiensis, 600-609.

ST. BERIN had come to England as a “regionary” bishop, with no special locality defined for his mission, but “left free to choose his own centre of operations.”¹ This is implied in the words of Bede when he tells us that the saint deemed it more profitable to preach in Wessex than to proceed to those innermost parts which his promise to Honorius would have led him to seek. But now that Cynegils had accepted Christianity, his first duty was to appoint a settled home from which the bishop might carry on his work; just as Ethelbert had assigned to Augustine “a place of abode in his own city of Doruvernis,” or Canterbury, and Oswald gave to

¹ Bright, *Early English Church*, p. 168, note.

Aidan "the place of an episcopal see in the island of Lindisfarne."¹

The choice of Dorchester was probably the result of some consultation between Cynegils and Oswald. As the Metrical Life states it :

"This tweye kynges tok hem to rede,
er hy departide a two."

And Bede records that "both the kings bestowed upon the bishop the city which is called Dorcic, to make there an episcopal see." We may assume that the choice was one which St. Berin himself approved. Possibly it may have been made at his suggestion. In any case, however it came about, the fact is very full of significance and raises questions which are more easily asked than answered, when we find that this place, with its past memories of Roman dominion and of British Christianity, was selected as the fitting see-town for the new bishopric.

Before inquiring into the reasons which may have led to such a choice, it will be necessary to examine the novel theory, already mentioned, that the place of St. Berin's bishopric was the Dorset capital, and that the town on the Thames was only the seat of the later Mercian bishopric, with which, it is alleged, the seat of the earlier West Saxon bishopric has been confused. Cassan, in his *Lives of the Bishops of Winchester* (1827),² quoting "the narrative of Birin's ministry" from Bede, adds that "it has been doubted whether Dorchester in Dorset, or Dorchester in Oxfordshire, be intended"; but he gives no authority. And Kemble, in his *Saxons in England* (1849), enumerating the cities mentioned in

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, i. 26; iii. 3.

² Vol. I., p. 98.

the Saxon Chronicle, boldly distinguishes between "Dorceceaster, Dornwaraceaster, Dorchester, Dorset," of the years 635, 636, 639, and "Dorceceaster, Dorchester, Oxon.," of the years 954, 971.¹ The question has recently been very fully argued.² First, it should be remembered that the town in Dorset, like that in Oxfordshire, was a royal manor, and therefore was in this respect equally suitable to be granted by the king to the bishopric. And from an early period the names of the two places became identical. Hence it is plain that a confusion between them might easily have arisen. Three arguments are produced in favour of the Dorset town: first, that according to Bede's account St. Berin remained in the district where he landed; secondly, that Capgrave's Chronicle speaks of him as "Byryn bischop of Dorsete"; thirdly, that the Oxfordshire Dorchester, being on the Mercian frontier, was a most unlikely place for the settlement of the West Saxon bishopric when the two kingdoms were already hostile to each other. But in the first place Bede only states that St. Berin decided to preach among the West Saxons rather than to proceed elsewhere, and there is nothing to imply that he remained in the southern part of their territory. Secondly, Capgrave's phrase, being corroborated by no expression in any other writer, cannot be taken to indicate (as is suggested) a tradition in the time of Edward IV., but is much more reasonably explained as a confusion with the bishopric of Sherborne, which was severed from the West Saxon bishopric seventy years after St. Berin's time; for the bishops of this See were actually bishops of Dorset,

¹ Vol. II., App. C, p. 553.

² *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, Vol. II. (1891), p. 98, etc.

and one of them, Alfwold, has this designation (*bisceop on Dorsætum*) in the Saxon Chronicle, where his death is recorded in 978.

The third argument, though it is purely theoretical, may seem at first sight to carry considerable weight. It can neither be understood nor answered without a careful examination of the facts of the history. We have already seen that the district in which the Oxfordshire Dorchester lies had been conquered by the Saxons in 571. Six years later they had crossed the Cotswolds and taken Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath,¹ thus gaining possession of the lower valley of the Severn. Dorchester would then be at the very centre of their kingdom. And this district appears to have been the scene of the one great effort which the Britons made to recover what they had lost; for in 614, says the Chronicle, "Cynegils and Cwichelm fought at Beandune and slew two thousand and sixty-five Welshmen"; and Beandune is commonly identified with Bampton,² a town on the Thames less than twenty miles above Dorchester. A few years later the advance of the West Saxons began to be checked by the growing power of the Mercians, and in 628 "Cynegils and Cwichelm fought against Penda at Cirencester and then made a treaty."³ It is probable that under this treaty the land of the Hwiccas, which included the Gloucestershire of later times, passed from the West Saxon kingdom to that of Penda.⁴ But it was the first encroachment of the Mercian, and Cynegils may have hoped to recover it. In any case the lands of the Gewissas were untouched for many miles above

¹ A.S. Chr., 577.

³ A.S. Chr., 628.

² Green, *Making of England*, p. 239.

⁴ Green, *Making of England*, p. 267.

Dorchester. Anticipating for the moment the subsequent history, we find that in 644, nine years after St. Berin's coming, Penda gained a victory so complete that he was able to expel Cenwalh, the son and successor of Cynegils, from the kingdom for three years. But it was not until 661, more than eleven years after St. Berin's death, that the neighbourhood of Dorchester was invaded by Wulfhere the son of Penda, who "laid the country waste as far as Ashdown," that is, as far as the line of the Berkshire hills a short distance south of the Thames. Even then it was not permanently conquered, but Dorchester was evidently becoming untenable as the See-town; and fifteen years later, in 676, Headda became bishop and finally transferred the See to Winchester, whither also he conveyed the body of the founder. The history points to the conclusion that Wulfhere's raid across the Thames decided the fate of Dorchester. But if the bishopric was in Dorset, there is nothing to show why its removal should take place at this particular period, nor is there any obvious reason why St. Berin's bones should have been translated at all.

Further, the positive arguments in favour of the traditional view are quite overwhelming. The compiler of the Saxon Chronicle draws no distinction between the Dorce-ceastre or Dorces-ceastre of St. Berin and the Dorce-ceastre which was a See-town in his own day. He records, under the year 897, the death of "Ealheard, biscop æt Dorceceastre"; and if the earlier one had been in Dorset, it is almost incredible that a Winchester annalist of the ninth century should have confused them together, or that he should have omitted to note the distinction between them. And William of Malmesbury,

in whose time the later bishopric of Dorchester was removed to Lincoln, tells us expressly that this see and that of the earlier bishopric were at the same place. He says :

“The two kings gave to their preacher for his episcopal see Dorcestre, then a city, now a town (*villa*), which at that time the kings of the West Saxons held, but afterwards the bishops of the Mercians ; and moreover to our time the episcopal see of the Mercians remained there, but is now at the city of Lincoln.”¹

In 1140 St. Berin's name was added to those of SS. Peter and Paul in the dedication of the newly-founded abbey at Dorchester, this dedication being, as far as we know, unique, and though this alone might not prove that he was believed to have been connected with the place, we have such proof completed when the dedication is explained by subsequent events ; for some forty years later, when the church was enlarged, St. Berin's history was portrayed in the windows, and in the next century the abbot and convent claimed that they still possessed his relics. Then the existence of other traditions of the saint in this district must be allowed to add weight on the same side, for they certainly have not been invented in modern times, and they are too deeply rooted to be easily explained away as a mere outgrowth from a mediæval mistake. Their weight, too, is the greater, since it does not appear that any similar traditions exist in Dorset.

We have seen also that Robert of Gloucester, in the time of Edward I., speaks of the place as “Derchestre that

¹ Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum*, II. 75 (p. 157).

biside Oxenford is"; and the Metrical Life of the same period says that the saint preached "in the contreye of Oxenforde."¹ And Higden, in the time of Edward III., calls it (to follow Trevisa's rendering) "Dorchestre, that is a symple toun by south Oxenforde by sides Walyngforde bytwene the fallynge togidres of Temse and of Tame." All this serves to show the extreme improbability of Capgrave having met with a different tradition in the time of Edward IV. Moreover, the early thirteenth-century Life in Capgrave's *Nova Legenda* calls it "Dorchestre seven miles from Oxford."

Again, the Dorcic-ceastre or Dorcot-ceastre of Bede and his Saxon translator is very distinct from the Dornwara-ceastre or Durnovaria, the chief town of the Durotriges. In Domesday the Oxfordshire town is Dorchecestre, and the Dorset town is Dorcestre. The name of Dorceceastre, which the one bears in the Saxon Chronicle, could never be correctly applied to the other.² Eventually all trace of the distinguishing middle portion disappears from each name. Indeed, as early as the tenth-century Chronicle of Ethelwerd, we find both towns alike designated by the abbreviated name of "Dorceastre."³ But in their original and fuller forms the two names were certainly not identical.

¹ Above, pp. 41, 69.

² It is alleged in *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, Vol. II., p. 103, that the Dorset town is *Dorkeceastre* in the Pipe Rolls of 14 John. These are not published; but in the Dodsworth Mss. of the Pipe Rolls in the Bodleian (Vol. XIV., f. 213) the name does not occur under that year, and in 12 John (*ibid.* 173) it is *Dorecestŕ*. The same form, or else *Dorcestŕ*, is given in all the published Pipe Rolls of Henry II. and Richard I. The Oxfordshire town occurs as *Dorchecestŕ* in those of 16, 17, and 18 Henry II. There is the same distinction in those of 3 John.

³ *Mon. Hist. Brit.*, pp. 499, 509.

It is important to notice also the part taken by the Northumbrian king in the assignment of the See-town. It clearly points to the place on the Mercian border where that king had influence, and not to the place in the remote south where the West Saxon king was independent. If the town was in Dorset, this part of the transaction can only be explained by the somewhat far-fetched suggestion that possibly some of the royal lands at Dorchester formed part of the princess' dowry, and therefore the consent of her husband became necessary in the settlement of the bishopric.¹

Finally, while it is clear that the town upon the Thames was not unsuitable by reason of its position on the Mercian frontier, it is more than doubtful, on the other hand, whether the settlement of the bishopric in the Dorset town would have been at all possible at this period; for it was almost certainly still in the hands of the Britons. It is argued that Bindon Hill in the parish of Lulworth, near the coast of Dorset (and not Bampton), is the "Beandune" of the Chronicle where "Cynegils and Cwichelm fought and slew two thousand and sixty-five Welshmen" in 614, and that this victory won the eastern part of Dorset for the Saxons.² Even so, Dorchester would still have been close upon the British frontier and no secure position for the bishopric. But of all the British fortresses in England Maiden-Castle beside Dorchester is said to be the strongest,³ and its capture must have involved a struggle which could not fail to leave its mark in history; yet, unless it be in the passage recording the slaughter at Beandune, the

¹ *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, Vol. II., p. 100.

² *Ibid.* p. 174.

³ *Ibid.* p. 173.

Chronicle is silent as to any progress of the Saxons hereabouts. And if that stronghold in the very centre of this small county was won in 614, the whole of Dorset was virtually conquered; yet it was not until 658 that Cenwalh pushed forward twenty-five miles beyond, and drove back the Welshmen to the Parret. This fact alone would seem to overthrow the theory that the southern Dorchester had been a possible place for the bishopric in 635.

We are brought to the conclusion that Dorchester upon the Thames was, beyond all reasonable doubt, St. Berin's See-town. Perhaps it was thought fitting to give this privilege to the place which had been the scene of the royal baptism. Very probably a stronger reason for the choice was the convenience of the place for the work which St. Berin would wish to push forward into the "innermost parts," in accordance with his promise to Honorius; and Oswald, in his zeal for the faith, would naturally desire that the mission which had been crowned with so great success in Wessex, should be directed as far as possible towards Mercia also. The very fact that this was fast becoming a debatable ground rather than a secure part of the West Saxon kingdom, though it might seem to make the position unsuitable for the episcopal see, may actually have been one of the reasons for choosing it. For the kingdom of Penda was not yet consolidated; he had thus far only laid the foundations of what was eventually to become the Mercian realm; and if the tribes upon this borderland which now owned the sway of Wessex were undecided in their allegiance, and liable at any time to transfer it to the rival power, there would be a strong political reason for planting the

missionary bishopric among them. Such a position of affairs appears to be implied in the action of Oswald. When Bede says that Dorchester was given to the bishop by "both the kings," the words can hardly mean that Oswald merely sanctioned it with the undefined authority which he possessed as Bretwalda. He had newly won his Northumbrian realms by defeating near Hexham the Welsh Ceadwalla, the ally of the Mercian Penda ; for the two confederates had conquered and slain the former Christian king, Edwin. Thus Oswald's victory involved in some measure a defeat of Penda as well as of Ceadwalla, and gave him a claim to the same overlordship in the Mercian district that Edwin had asserted before him. This may explain why the Northumbrian king should seem to have an equal authority with Cynegils in fixing the position of the West Saxon See-town.

There is evidence which shows that a considerable territory around Dorchester was granted at the same time for the endowment of the bishopric. This territory had no doubt formed part of the royal manor of Bensington, which had been held by the king from the time of its original conquest. Mention has already been made of the way in which this manor was gradually broken up,¹ and some leading instances may be noted by way of illustration. One portion, consisting of lands in Britwell and Watlington, was granted in 880 to the church "at Readenorán" (supposed to be Radnor) by Æthelred, duke of the Mercians, with the sanction of King Alfred ;² a century later King Ethelred the Unready gave a portion in Newton and Britwell to his queen Emma, and

¹ Page 76.

² Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, II. 547, p. 167. See Pearman's *Bensington*, p. 6.

another adjoining it to his three brothers, Eadric, Eadwig, and Ealred;¹ and portions in Crowmarsh were given also by William the Conqueror to Battle Abbey and to Walter Giffard. Thus the king's large possession between the Chilterns and the river became gradually diminished. It is probable that this dismemberment of the manor first began when Cynegils bestowed a large portion of it for the endowment of St. Berin's See.

The position of these lands which fell to the bishopric may to some extent be inferred from the form which the hundred of Dorchester assumed. The main body of this hundred consists of a group of six parishes, including Dorchester, chiefly within the angle of the Thame and the Thames. It was very much larger at the time of the Norman Conquest, having probably been extended as the wealth of the bishops of the later bishopric extended their domain, and a new hundred of Thame seems to have been severed from it when the bishopric was transferred to Lincoln. But it is unlikely that any of its lands passed back into the manorial jurisdiction of Bensington. The half-hundred of Bensington—so called in Domesday, probably because the tenants of the royal manor were exempt from attendance at the hundred-courts²—lay to the south-east of the hundred of Dorchester. But each of these hundreds contains detached portions of the other, and their peculiar distribution carries us back to the time when the king gave the lands to the bishopric.

One such isolated portion of the Dorchester hundred lies some miles south of Bensington, adjoining the spot on the brow of the Chilterns known as Berin's Hill.

¹ Pearman, *Bensington*, p. 7.

² *Ibid.* p. 14.

Another such portion is the hamlet of Fifield, adjacent to the village of Bensington and included in its parish; and this is of very remarkable interest in connection with the ministry of St. Berin. Like other Fifields in different parts of England, its name is doubtless a corruption of "Five Hides," and from its inclusion in Dorchester hundred, though distant some four miles from any other part of it, this may be presumed to have been a portion of the king's grant to the bishop. The modernised manor-house is evidently an ancient chapel, with massive walls and a traceried window-head of the thirteenth century at the west end; the field on the west of it is still called "Chapel-Close"; and the tradition of the place says that it was a convent, but its mediæval history seems to be quite unknown. In all probability, therefore, the five hides of land at Fifield were given to St. Berin in order that he might have a place of occasional residence at the royal vill; and if so, it throws an interesting light upon the bishop's position as a member of the king's council. A parallel instance is recorded in the history of St. Aidan, who, as we learn from Bede, "had a church and a chamber" at the royal vill of Bamborough, two miles from his own abode at Lindisfarne, and "it was his custom to turn in there frequently and lodge, and thence to go out and preach in the neighbourhood, which thing also he was wont to do in other villis of the king."¹

According to the Winchester annalist, the selection of Dorchester was merely a temporary arrangement. "Cynegils (he says) gave St. Birin the city of Dorchester that he might have his seat there in the meantime, until he should build a church worthy of so great a priest in

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, III. 17.

the royal city.”¹ There might have been force in this if a worthy church had been ready at Dorchester ; but as there was not, we may dismiss the statement as expressing merely what a Winchester monk might imagine. Higden also says that “when Byrin was dead King Kenwalc placed the see at Winchester as his father had previously proposed:”² which may merely mean that Cynegils had foreseen the need of placing the seat of the bishopric eventually in the chief city of the realm, though there were reasons for placing it at Dorchester in the meantime. The monks of Winchester had a legend, or rather, a pile of legend upon legend, which Rudborne records, that the king in the fourth year of his conversion had made preparation for a fitting church at Winchester by destroying a “temple of Dagon” which Cerdic had built, and that this temple had occupied the site of a British Christian sanctuary founded by “King Lucius” and destroyed in Diocletian’s persecution, and then rebuilt in honour of “St. Amphibalus.”³ The anonymous annalist of Winchester also relates that Cynegils collected materials for building the church, but was prevented by a mortal sickness from fulfilling his purpose, and therefore “called his son Cenwalh to him and made him swear by his soul in the presence of St. Birin that he would build in Winchester a church worthy of the bishopric, and would on his own part offer to God for the work of its ministrations the land round about the same church, and confirm it for a perpetual possession.”⁴

¹ *Ann. de Winton. in Ann. Monast.* (Rolls Series, 36), II., p. 4.

² *Polychron.*, I. liii.

³ Rudborne, II. 1 (*Angl. Sacr.*, p. 189).

⁴ *Ann. de Winton. in Ann. Monast.*, II. 4, 5.

The same authority, as well as Rudborne,¹ tells us that Cynegils had also assigned all the land for a space of seven miles round the city for the endowment of the See. Another form of this tradition appears in the doubtful charter of King Ethelwulf dated 857, confirming to the church of Winchester a grant made by Cynegils to "his baptism-father," St. Birin, of the manor of "Ciltacumbe."² This is Chilcomb, a village two miles from the city, and its ancient parish has now been divided into seven. The estate is known to have been held by the church of Winchester from the period of its foundation.³

¹ II. i. 189.

² Kemble, *Cod. Dipl.*, MLVII., Vol. V., p. 113.

³ Bright, *Early English Ch.*, p. 183.

CHAPTER VI

ST. BERIN'S MINISTRY

"Quale sopor fessis, qualis sudantibus umbra,
Talis Birini sermo gentilibus. Aures
Allicit, et mira reficit dulcedine mentes.
Neve relinquatur populi nova signa stupentis
Indiscussa fides et adhuc dubitabile verbum,
Voce quod adstruxit ratione perhabiliori
Vir sacer ostendit, oculusque fidelior aure
Argumenta capit sperandæ certa salutis,
Confirmatque manu Dominus quod predicat ore
Servus, et exprimitur divina potencia signis,
Ut credant operi qui nolunt credere verbo."

Alexander Essebiensis, 523-533.

WHATEVER may have been the king's ultimate intentions with regard to Winchester, we know from Bede that Dorchester was the centre from which St. Berin carried on his mission, with his vast field of labour stretching southward and northward. On the one side was the West Saxon kingdom, "from Dorset to Buckinghamshire, from Surrey to the Severn,"¹ on the other side were the Mercian lands, reaching to the Humber. The realm of Cynegils had the first claim upon his care, while the lands to the north of it were open for such efforts as might be possible to him. But we have only the brief record: "Churches were built and dedicated, and many

¹ Bright, *Early English Church*, p. 171.

people were called to the Lord by his pious labour." "This," writes Dr. Bright, "is Bede's summary of a work as to which he could get no detailed information, but which must have had its own interests and characteristics, its own experiences of hope and anxiety, of partial failure compensated by general advance, which, if preserved to us, might have made the conversion of Wessex as living a fact to us as that of Northumbria. As it is, we cannot recover a single feature in those missionary journeys of Birinus."¹

Later writers than Bede fill in imaginary details. Thus the Breviary Lection, giving this passage from Bede almost word for word, inserts a clause in the middle of it :

"Therefore being enthroned in his See the blessed prelate prepares churches, overthrows the temples with their images, ordains clergy, teaches by word and example how to live."

The writer of the earlier Life expands this at length, and then adds freely to it according to his habit. A few clauses will serve as a good example of the affectations and quaint conceits of his work and also of its better sentiments.

"He exhorted the sinners to cease from sin; he punished with fatherly and not with wrathful feeling; nor from the privilege entrusted to him was he wroth with those under his charge; but with wings of mercy the dove-like man in gentleness smote them. . . . And not negligently did God's servant preach to the people the Word of God. He was instant, as saith the apostle, in season and out of season: he did the work of an evangelist: he was zealous with a good zeal to fulfil his

¹ Bright, *Early English Church*, p. 171.

ministry : he studied with carefulness to show himself approved of God, a workman that is not ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. Moreover he was brave in the strength of abstinence, bountiful in alms, watchful in prayer, studious in reading ; and what flowers he plucked from the garden of the divine page, those he faithfully placed in the treasury of his heart that he might bring them forth into action. . . . This man, O Britain, is thy bulwark ; thy father and pastor is the apostolic man ; a preacher of truth, a gospel-trumpet, an angel of chaste counsel, a physician prepared for the healing of thy wounds. He drove away from thee the idol-worship, the perverted race of sinners, the evil inhabitants whose head is the devil ; and he brought into thee the faith and all the good company of righteousness, the peaceful inhabitants whose Head is Christ. He it is that called thee back from the misery of error, and thy fierceness he so softened and broke, that thou, who before wast only wont to gnash with barbarous sound, art now taught a divine harmony, and dost rejoice both with accordant voice and with devout mind to sing praise to the Lord."

Where the Lection says that "he ordained clergy," the writer of the Life expands it thus :

"He chose men whom he approved as fitting in their life and knowledge, and he raised them by the canonical degrees to holy orders, giving them titles to his own mother-church ; and the divine order and clerical rule and canonical discipline which he had learned, he was the first to put in practice in them and among them. He was their father and their servant, their companion and their master."

Capgrave's Life of St. Berin also tells us that "he appointed secular canons at Dorchester." In Surius' version this is altered to "regular canons," as if to

identify them with those whom (as this Life proceeds to relate) Bishop Alexander of Lincoln afterwards established here in King Stephen's time. Rudborne, jealous for his own city, ignores Dorchester in this matter, and dates the foundation of his own monastery back to St. Berin, telling us that "the monks of the order of St. Benedict, whom he had brought with him to preach the Word of God, he placed in the old monastery of Winchester." As a matter of fact the Benedictines were brought to Winchester from Abingdon in 963 by King Edgar and Bishop Ethelwold, when the older house of secular canons was displaced for them.

We know, however, nothing at all of what clergy St. Berin had around him, or whence they came. We must assume that he had some fellow-helpers before he was able to ordain any among his own converts, and therefore when we read of his founding a college of canons at Dorchester, there is necessarily a basis of fact behind the tradition.

A special interest belongs to one priest whom in all probability (if the facts are correctly recorded) St. Berin both converted and ordained, and whom we may also reasonably suppose to have been a member of whatever cathedral body he had at Dorchester. The sixth archbishop of Canterbury, who was raised to that See in 655, taking the name of Deusdedit, or Adeodatus, was, according to Thomas of Elmham,¹ a West Saxon by birth, called in his native tongue Fritonas, or Frithona; and he was the first of English race who attained to that dignity.

The only certain records of St. Berin's ministry that

¹ *Hist. Mon. S. Aug. Cant.*, vi. 18.

we possess after the Baptism of Cynegils, are the brief entries of two other royal Baptisms contained in the Saxon Chronicle, and derived in all probability from such an informal register of notable events as the Dorchester clergy would be likely to preserve. Indeed, only the second of these entries mentions St. Berin as the baptiser; but perhaps in the former it is intended to be understood from the preceding entry, and in both cases we must regard him as the agent through whom the conversion was brought about. Immediately after the record of the Baptism of Cynegils by Birinus, we read:

“636. This year Cwichelm was baptised at Dorcesceastre, and the same year he died.”

Cwichelm was the son of Cynegils, as a later entry in the Chronicle states.¹ Perhaps the fact that he shared the throne with Cynegils led Malmesbury and some less important authorities to call them brothers. He is also accounted his father's equal as a courageous warrior. We hear of him first in 614, three years after his father's accession, when they fought side by side at Beandune.² He did not at first join with his father in accepting the Christian faith. But Berin's influence and Cynegils' example, as Malmesbury³ tells us, had so far impressed him that in the next year, when he felt his health to be declining, he also was baptised. In Trevisa's rendering of the *Polychronicon*:

“Quichelmus voidede and wolde nought fonge the sacrament of cristenyng, til he was afterward i-warned by febilnesse of his body.”

¹ 648. . . . *Cwichelm Cynegilsing.*

² Above, p. 89.

³ *Gesta Reg.*, I. 18.

Cuthred, Cwichelm's son, who succeeded him as under-king, was the next royal convert, after a three years' interval. In 639, says the Chronicle, Birinus baptised King Cuthred at Dorchester and received him as his son.

It is impossible to conjecture the reason for St. Berin being himself the godfather. Possibly no royal sponsor could conveniently be found. Or it may betoken the special solicitude with which he regarded the young king for whose conversion he must have been waiting those three years with deep anxiety. Certainly it must now have been a time of great thankfulness and encouragement to the bishop, when both the kings had entered the Christian fold. But darker days were shortly to follow. King Cynegils died in 643, after a reign of thirty-two years; Cuthred was passed over; and Cenwalh, the second son of Cynegils, still a pagan, succeeded to the kingdom. Bede sums up briefly the events of the reign of Coinwalch (as he writes the name):

"He refused to receive the faith and sacraments of the heavenly kingdom, and not long after he lost also the power of the earthly kingdom. For he put away the sister of Penda, king of the Mercians, whom he had married, and took another wife; whereupon he was attacked by Penda, and being driven from his kingdom he fled to the king of the Eastern Angles whose name was Anna; and being with him three years in exile he learned and received the belief of the truth; for the king with whom he lived in exile was a good man, and happy in a good and holy offspring."¹

A charter purporting to be given by King Athelstan in 932 confirms to the church of Winchester a grant made

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, III, 7.

to it by King Cenwalh, "whom Saint Byrin first bishop of the Saxons baptised, instructed and confirmed" (*baptizavit, instituit et corroboravit*).¹ It is probably on this that the Winchester annalist grounds his statement that "Cenwalh (*Kinewalchus*) the son of Kinegils was baptised by Birin."² Perhaps the mistake arose from confusing him with Cwichelm, or perhaps the writer assumed that he was a Christian from the story of his father binding him by an oath to build a worthy church at Winchester.³ But as Cenwalh became a Christian in East Anglia, his conversion cannot have been the work of St. Berin, and Florence of Worcester tells us that he was baptised by St. Felix. The "Book of Ely"—a valuable authority for East Anglian matters—repeats this statement, and adds that King Anna "received him from the font" as godfather, and that "afterwards with Anna's help he returned into Wessex and forcibly won back his paternal kingdom from his enemies."⁴ Under the advice of St. Felix, as we may presume, he took again his rejected wife, and after the three years he was enabled to return to his kingdom.

Five years had now elapsed since the death of Cynegils, and to St. Berin they must have been years of perplexity and trial; but we hear nothing of any break in his ministry. We imagine him steadily persevering in the charge of the flock which he had gathered and in his missionary labours, and the two years of life which yet remained to him must have been passed in thankfulness and peace.

¹ Birch, *Cartul. Saxon.* 690, II., p. 382.

² *Ann. Monast.* (Rolls Ser., 36), II., p. 4.

⁴ *Liber Eliensis* (Anglia Christiana Soc.), I. 7.

³ *Ibid.*

In connection with Cwichelm and Cuthred, who were under-kings with Cynegils, and with Cenwalh who succeeded him, there is a second eminence to be noticed on the Berkshire Downs, some three miles from Churn Knob which recalls the memory of Cynegils' conversion. Locally it is known as Scutchamore Knob; Gough, in his edition of Camden's *Britannia*,¹ calls it "Cuckamsley Hill or Cuchinslow"; and there can be little doubt that it is the "Cwichelms-Hlaw" mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle as a point to which the Danes came in 1006.

We learn from Bede² that in 626 Cwichelm had sent an assassin named Eumer with a poisoned dagger to slay King Edwin, whereupon Edwin came with an army against the West Saxons and "either killed or subdued all whom he found to have conspired against him." The Chronicle adds that he "killed five kings and slew a great number of the people." Matthew Paris apparently assumes that Cwichelm himself was one of these five kings. Edwin, he says, "slew Quichelm in the place which to this day is called in the tongue of the English *Quichelmeshlawe*, and in witness of the victory gave the place its name."³ But we have seen that Cwichelm was alive ten years later; and as he was baptised when he felt that his end was near, it seems to imply that he died a natural death. Scutchamore Knob, moreover, was not his grave, as Matthew Paris seems to think it, for it has not the character of a burial-mound; but being a lofty pile of turfs, cut from the down, it was probably raised as a landmark.

¹ I. 157 (ed. 1789).

² II. 9.

³ *Flores Hist.*, I., p. 303.

The Saxon Chronicle relates that King Cenwalh in 648 bestowed on Cuthred, his kinsman, three thousand hides of land by Ashdown—the name which these hills then bore; and it has been thought that this mound may mark the gift, although for some unknown reason it bears the name of Cuthred's father instead of his own name. When Cenwalh returned to his kingdom after his expulsion, Cuthred, according to Henry of Huntingdon,¹ was "his helper." And it might seem probable that this gift was the recompense for his aid.² But there may have been a further reason for it. Cenwalh, it must be remembered, had succeeded to the kingdom to the exclusion of his nephew Cuthred, the under-king, and possibly this large grant of land, amounting (if the figure is correct) to about half the present area of Berkshire, may have been made to Cuthred as a compensation; and though it was not actually bestowed until the fifth year of Cenwalh's reign, it may have been the fulfilment of a compact made with Cwichelm twelve years before; and indeed the mound may actually have been erected in testimony of it by Cwichelm himself, and may thus have gained its designation.³

Bede says Cenwalh was three years in banishment. His expulsion, according to the Saxon Chronicle, took place in 645; his Baptism the following year; and he gave to Cuthred the three thousand hides by Ashdown in 648. This corresponds with the year of his return from exile. Was his first act, when returning as a Christian, to make good to Cuthred a long-standing

¹ *Hist. Angl.*, Lib. II., a° 645.

² Bright, *Early Eng. Ch.*, p. 182.

³ See Lysons' *Berkshire*, p. 161, and *Transactions of the Newbury District Field Club*, 1871, p. 169.

promise which as a heathen he had refused to fulfil, and to which Cwichelm's Hill had always borne its silent witness?

If this was so, Cenwalh's next act, as recorded in one of the later copies of the Saxon Chronicle under the same year, fitly corresponds with it:

"This year the minster was built at Winchester, which King Cenwalh caused to be made in St. Peter's name, and hallowed."¹

The original Winchester version of the Chronicle mentions the building of this church in connection with Cenwalh's accession under the year 643:

"Cenwalh succeeded to the kingdom of the West Saxons and held it thirty-one winters; and this Cenwalh had the church built at Winchester."

This does not necessarily mean that he built the church in that year, but the mention of it may be inserted here by the Winchester compiler as being in his mind the great event of Cenwalh's life. Other versions, however, assign the accession of Cenwalh to the year 641, and add the building of the church in the following year. And it may be that Cenwalh regarded this work as a duty which he owed to his father's memory, and therefore, though still a heathen, he may have set about it immediately. We have noted already the story of Cynegils making him swear before St. Berin that he would do it, and the large grant of land which he bestowed upon it. There is also an old tradition that Cenwalh endowed the church further with the manor of Dunton, according to a charter of Athelstan confirming

¹ A.S. Chr., F., a° 648.

the gift in the year 932.¹ The Winchester annalist describes Cenwalh's grant as consisting of three manors—Dunton, Alresford, and Worting.² The first is a town near Salisbury, now known as Downton, close to the Hampshire border: the others are villages in Hampshire. But whatever value we may attach to these accounts, we may accept without question the statement that in the year 648 the church which Cenwalh built "was hallowed in St. Peter's name." And we can hardly doubt that this hallowing was performed by St. Berin himself;³ for, though the Chronicle does not actually state it, we may take it to be implied, since the next entry is the record of St. Berin's death. Rudborne states it explicitly, adopting a grandiose style:

"In the sixth year of King Kinewald [Cenwalh], when the building of the church of Wenta was finished and it was adorned with a fitting company of monks, the blessed Birin, Christ's fellow-mystery-worker,⁴ dedicated the Basilica itself in the twelfth year of his apostleship in honour of the supreme and undivided Trinity."

This last statement contradicts the fact as recorded in the Chronicle. The equally baseless story of the monks has been already noticed.⁵

We know nothing of the attempts which St. Berin may have made to carry his work of evangelisation outside the limits of the West Saxon kingdom. Yet the districts to the north of it were the original object of his

¹ Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, II., p. 381.

² *Ann. Winton.* in *Ann. Monast.*, II., p. 5.

³ Bright, *Early. Engl. Ch.*, ch. V., p. 183.

⁴ *Symmysta*. Origen (*In Jesu Nave*, Hom. VII. 3) uses the same expression of St. Paul.

⁵ Page 103.

mission, if Bede's words—"the innermost parts beyond those of the Angles"—are to be taken literally. Ethelwerd indeed says that he "came to the Western Angles preaching Christ's gospel to them";¹ but he is evidently using the term, as Bede had done, to mean the same as Saxons, and not with a distinctive meaning. Some writers have described his mission as if it had produced results in Mercia as great as those in Wessex. Bishop Tanner, for example, says that he "converted to the Christian faith King Kinegils and almost the entire kingdoms of the Mercians and the West Saxons."² But if we may assume that a mission with its centre at Dorchester would necessarily put forth some effort among the tribes that owed allegiance to Penda, yet it is plain that no great results could be effected among them while their rulers remained heathen; and it was three years after St. Berin's death that the Midland Angles, or South Mercians, "received the faith and sacraments of the truth under their prince Peada, the son of King Penda."³

The definite stories that we have of St. Berin's work in Mercia are obviously mythical, and the growth of those stories is not difficult to trace. Bede, in his account of the evangelisation of the South Saxons by St. Wilfrid, says that "the king of that nation was Ædilwalch, who was baptised not long before in the province of the Mercians, King Wulfhere being present and proposing it; and by him also he was received as son when he came forth from the font; in token of

¹ *Mon. Hist. Brit.*, p. 506.

² Tanner, *Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica* (1748), p. 102.

³ Bede, III. 21; A.S. Chron., a° 653.

which adoption he gave him two provinces, namely the Isle of Vecta and the province of the Meanvari in the nation of the West Saxons. The bishop then, with the king's consent, or rather to his great joy, washed in the sacred fountain the principal chiefs and soldiers of the province; but the presbyters Eappa and Padda and Burghelm and Oddi baptised the rest of the people either then or afterwards."¹

Later writers seem to have assumed without inquiry that a royal Baptism taking place in the Mercian kingdom must have been administered by St. Berin. Thus the Hyde Chronicler gives the story from Vigilantius, *De Basilica Petri*—a work which has not come down to us—saying that "Æthelwold" (as he writes the name), "king of the South Saxons, was converted and baptised by blessed Birin, apostle of the Gewisei and monk." Then, after relating the king's Baptism in the words of Bede, he attributes the Baptism of the chiefs and soldiers also to "blessed Birin, bishop and monk," whereas the bishop to whom Bede attributes it is Wilfrid. We get the statement also in the French Chronicle, *Le Livre de Reis*, written about 1274:

"Edwold le tierz rei de Suthsexe rescut la fei crestiene par Seint Birin le eveske de Wyncestre."²

Similarly Capgrave in his Chronicle of England relates that Ethelwold, the fifth king of Sussex, "was converted be Byryn, bischop of Dorsete."³ The mistake is repeated also by Rudborne in his History of Winchester.⁴ But

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, IV. 13. The Meonwaras were a Jutish tribe in Hampshire, akin to those of the Isle of Wight.

² Rolls Ser., 42, p. 46.

³ Rolls Ser., I, p. 100.

⁴ *Hist. Maj. Winton.* V., cap. 1 (*Angl. Sac.*, p. 252).

Bede implies that Wulfhere's gift of the two provinces to Ethelwalch was made at the same time as the Baptism, and the Chronicle places them under 661, eleven years after St. Berin's death. We may therefore presume that Ethelwalch was baptised by Trumhere, the third bishop of the Mercians.

Some modern writers have also credited St. Berin with the Baptism of Wulfhere himself.¹ This seems to have originated from a mistaken reading of the part which Wulfhere took in the Baptism of Ethelwalch. A passage from some older Chronicle is preserved by Henry de Silegrave—probably an abbot of Ramsey who died in 1268; but his Chronicle is continued to 1274.² Its account of Ethelwalch is paraphrased from that already cited from Bede; but it states that "he by the action and in the presence of the king of the Mercians, Wulfhere, believed in Christ *through Bishop Birin*, and was baptised in the province of the Mercians."³ The same passage is given a century earlier by Gervase, the sacrist of Canterbury, who was an industrious compiler of histories; but by inserting, perhaps accidentally, the word *qui* after Wulfhere's name, he makes the passage state, first, that Wulfhere was converted by St. Birin, and then that Ethelwalch also was baptised in Wulfhere's presence.⁴

We have in fact no definite information of the baptism

¹ Addington's *Dorchester*, p. 59. Crake's *Doomed City*, p. 303.

² *Chron. Henr. de Silegrave*, ed. C. Hook, for the Caxton Society, 1849, p. v.

³ *Ibid.* p. 35.

⁴ "Ethelwalchus. Hic agente et præsentē rege Merciorum Wulfero, *qui* per Birinum in Christum credidit, et baptizatus est in ipsa Merciorum provincia." Gervase, *Gesta Regum*, Rolls, 73, II., p. 41.

of Wulfhere. Two years after the Middle Angles, under Peada their prince, received the faith, Penda was slain by Oswy, in 655; and then, says the Saxon Chronicle, "the Mercians"—that is, the northern portion of the realm—"became Christians," when Peada succeeded to the kingdom. Two years later Peada died, and his brother Wulfhere succeeded, being already a Christian. In a legend of the martyrdom of Wulfadius and Ruffinus, sons of Wulfhere, contained in the story of the foundation of Stone Priory in Staffordshire and attributed by Leland to a monk of Peterborough, this monarch is said to have been baptised by Finan;¹ but it is possible that the statement originated from a confusion with his brother Peada, or from the assumption that both were baptised together. We only know, therefore, that Wulfhere was baptised at some time before he became sponsor for Ethelwalch in 661. And in that year, so far from receiving Baptism at the hands of the West Saxon bishop, he made a hostile incursion into that kingdom and "laid the country waste," as the Chronicler says, "as far as Æscendune."

There is a similar blunder, adding yet another king to St. Berin's converts, in a manuscript copied by Leland and quoted from him by Hearne. It states that "Birín baptised Kinegils king of the West Saxons and Oswald king of the Northumbrians."²

We must therefore dismiss as mere fiction the story that St. Berin baptised six kings, or five, in the course of his ministry; and for the facts of that ministry we must

¹ Dugdale, *Monast. Angl.*, VI., p. 227. Cf. Leland's *Collectanea*, I., p. 1.

² Hearne's *Leland*, Vol. VIII., p. 96.

admit that scarcely anything can be added to what Bede has told us. We cannot doubt that his work was as full of interest as that of Augustine was. The Baptism of the king of Wessex and of a large portion of his people, and the Baptisms of two under-kings afterwards, the organisation of the church at Dorchester in the early days of his mission, and the hallowing of the minster at Winchester in his latter days, are the only facts that have come down to us. But they stand as centres around which it needs no effort of imagination to picture the scenes of an eventful life. And it cannot have been an entirely self-contained work involving no contact with the surrounding churches. Whether it needed any communication with Honorius of Canterbury or with Paulinus and Ithamar of Rochester, we cannot tell. We can hardly suppose that all intercourse with the Northumbrian Church was closed after the memorable meeting with Oswald, or that Cenwalh's Baptism at Anna's court and his subsequent return to Wessex took place without any communication between Berin and Felix. Perhaps also there was sufficient commerce between the sea-ports of Genoa and Southampton to give Asterius of Milan some further opportunity of helping forward the work of the missionary whom he had consecrated. Certainly we may be sure that correspondence passed between the missionary and Rome. Bale, in his notice of St. Berin, speaks of such communications with the pope as if he were acquainted with them. "His writings," he says, "were, as far as we know, very few, namely, some Epistles to Honorius."¹ Bishop Tanner

¹ *Scriptorum . . . Britanniae Catalogus*, f. 117 ed.

also repeats the statement.¹ But Bale may be merely assuming that some epistles must have been written, for we seem to hear nothing of them elsewhere, though possibly he had evidence which is lost to us; for the infancy and growth of such a work in Britain could never fail to interest the pope under whose advice it had its beginning. It must, however, be remembered that Pope Honorius died in 638.²

¹ Tanner, *Bibl. Britannico-Hibernica*, p. 102.

² Plummer's *Bede*, *H. E.*, Vol. II., p. 112.

CHAPTER VII

LOCAL TRADITIONS

"His est cos, dos, flos, et ros; cos religionis,
Dos fidei, flos ecclesiæ, ros dogmatis. H'c est
Libra, liber, limen, limes, scola, scalaque; libra
Consilii, liber eloquii, limen rationis,
Limes honestatis, scola morum, scala salutis."

Alexander Essebiensis, 103-107.¹

It is of course unsafe to attach a very high value to the common traditions of a neighbourhood. Given a prominent position showing some marked features of antiquity and a prominent local personage whose memory is held sacred, there is at once a natural tendency to connect the one with the other, and thus a story which has its origin in popular fancy is supposed to have come down from the age to which it relates. But there are traditions of St. Berin which fit together with such consistency as to suggest that they are something more than fanciful inventions.

The most important of these is the story of his preaching on Churn Knob in Berkshire. In William Hewett's *History and Antiquities of the Hundred of Compton*, published in 1844—the work of a writer who lived in the

¹ In this and in one or two other cases, where no passage could be found corresponding distinctly with the contents of the chapter, a few lines not entirely inappropriate are given as additional specimens of Alexander of Ashby's work.

locality and carefully studied all its relics of the past—we read :

“The common people report that one of the early preachers of the Gospel was accustomed to hold forth on Churn Knob, where he was listened to by crowded audiences.”

And the writer suggests that the tradition may refer “to St. Birinus himself, who certainly, under the auspices of the ruling princes, preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of these downs.”¹

This appears more definitely in Murray’s *Handbook for Berks* (1860), p. 59 :

“The eminence of Churn Knob is remarkable for the local tradition that there St. Birinus used to preach in the open air to his converts and disciples.”

Another local writer, who was thoroughly conversant with the history and the folk-lore of this district, relates the story to the effect that Churn Knob was the scene of St. Berin’s first preaching before King Cynegils ;² and this is the commonly accepted form of the tradition.

Churn has become famous in recent years as a scene of military manœuvres, to which the broad expanse of the downs lends itself conveniently. In those days they were largely wooded with the ash trees which gave them the name of *Æscendune*.³ The spot known as Churn Knob is one of very considerable antiquarian interest, occupy-

¹ Hewett’s *Compton*, p. 127.

² *Stories of the Old Saints*, etc., by A. D. Crake, Vicar of Cholsey, p. 105.

³ Asser (*De Gestis Alfredi*, a° 871) interprets it *Mons Fraxini*. The ash trees were still plentiful in the seventeenth century : see Wise’s *Letter to Dr. Mead concerning some Antiquities in Berkshire*, 1738.

ing a bleak eminence which projects northward above Blewbury. A valley surrounds three sides of the hill, and the fourth side is joined to the main ridge of the downs by a gentle slope. In dry seasons a broad track-way from the south can be distinguished across the corn-fields which cover the intervening valley, and along this track-way we may well suppose that St. Berin travelled in his journey from the neighbourhood of Southampton. The eminence is remarkable for nothing but its "Knob," a barrow raised upon the ridge and visible from a long distance. This suggests that the name *Churn* must be connected, directly or indirectly, with the British *carn* which is commonly modernised as *cairn*. The familiar English word seems to have been substituted in popular speech for the similar but obsolete Celtic word.¹ In that case *Knob* is an explanatory suffix added to the name when its meaning had been lost. The one tumulus is prominent still, crowned by a single fir tree. Others may be seen around it, not quite ploughed down, and others are entirely gone. One has been hidden in modern times by a plantation of firs, and has almost disappeared, while the firs form a conspicuous landmark. Such is the spot itself. But there are points to be noted in its

¹ There is an interesting parallel at Cirencester, where several curious mounds are to be seen in a field called "the Querns," and this must apparently be connected with the name of Ciren-, Cyren-, or Cirn-ceastre (A.S. Chron., A, B, E), and also with the name of the river Churn on which it stands.—*Newbury Field Club*, Vol. IV. (1895), p. 9. See also Skeat, *Etymol. Dict.*, *cairn*, who points out that in Scott ("Lady of the Lake," c. V. st. 14) "*cairn*" rhymes with "*stern*." He connects it with the Welsh *carnu*, "to pile up, heap together." Hence the word in its origin does not necessarily mean a heap of stones rather than of earth.

surroundings. Beneath it, along the edge of the valley, passes the Roman Portway; and above it, along the front of the hills, passes the broad grass-track of the Ridgeway; these being the two parallel courses of the famous "Icknield Street," which the Romans had adopted as their own, passing from Caistor near Norwich in the Icenian territory, and leading across the entire island.¹ It has curved round the front of the Chiltern Hills and crossed the Thames into Berkshire, and hence it passes on by King Alfred's Wantage, and the great White Horse at Uffington, to traverse Wiltshire and Somersetshire towards Exeter and the remote south-west. On the Portway at the foot of Churn Hill is the village of Blewbury, with the detached knoll of Blewburton rising eastward out of the plain. The village shows the clearly-marked outline of a Roman camp, and is intersected in every direction with abundant springs bubbling up from the chalk, and now utilized for the growth of water-cress. It looks as if the conqueror first gained possession of the wells, and then planted the camp from which he could storm the hill-fort of the Briton. Blewbury, the Saxon *Bleobyrig*, the *Blittherie* or *Blidberie* of Domesday, is commonly taken to mean the "blood-burh," but an odd legend serves the country-folk for an explanation of the name. The dead, they say, were brought hither from all the neighbourhood for burial, and when the bearers reached the front of the down, they sounded a horn and *blew* the call to *bury*. The legend, however absurd, fits in with the facts which recent investigations

¹ See Green, *Making of England*, p. 121. But he confuses the two parallel tracks.

have revealed. The local antiquary, already quoted, states that :

“These open downs, more especially Blewbury Bottom, appear to have been the cemetery not only for the neighbourhood, but for this whole district for many miles around. Barrows were only raised to the memory of exalted personages, and it seems probable that on the death of any king or other illustrious individual, his corpse was conveyed to these consecrated hills, and here buried near his ancestors.”¹

This is illustrated from two tumuli in the same district, in which a large number of very rude burial urns were found “arranged in two concentric circles around the circumference of the mound,” more than forty being exhumed from a small section, as if a succession of urns had been inserted in the mound as each member of the family died, for many generations.²

The cluster of barrows, therefore, about Churn Knob points to the fact that it had been a notable burial-place of some primitive tribe, and as such it would be dedicated to their religious rites, and its sacred character would not disappear when those who gathered here were converted to Christianity. The ancient track-way approaching Churn Hill from the south is discernible across the fields in dry seasons, and another may be traced northward.

Further, if we pass from Blewbury eastward along the Portway, its direct line, though now ending abruptly at Cholsey, points to the ferry over the river at Littlestoke ; and while the Icknield Way trends northward, the straight course leads up the front of the Chiltern Hills to a point

¹ Hewett, *Hundred of Compton*, p. 125.

² *Ibid.*

above Ipsden, where we have a second tradition of St. Berin. A projecting angle of the wooded slope has been known from time immemorial as "Berin's Hill." From the foot of it two remarkable tracks, hollowed out to the depth of some feet in the chalk, diverge on either side of the modern roadway which has superseded them, and meet again upon the summit. The villagers say that before the road was made, half-a-century ago, one of these hollow ways was used for ascent, and the other for descent. Whatever may be the true explanation of their form, there can be no doubt of their extreme antiquity. At the point where they meet again upon the hill-top they enclose a pair of earth-circles, each with a shallow surrounding trench. In the wood below, a few yards from the double track, is an ancient well, to which common belief and the judgment of antiquaries agree in assigning a Roman origin. Numerous coins also, from Claudius to Constantius, have been found here, and various Roman remains exist abundantly all around, proving that it was a military outpost. A high authority on the antiquities of this neighbourhood states that "Berin's Hill was one of the Dorchester tenures, and bore the name of Bispesdon. . . . It was Bishopton officially down to the reign of Henry VIII." The name shows that the abbey had inherited it from the previous bishopric, and we infer that this spot, like the neighbouring parish of South Stoke which is an isolated portion of Dorchester Hundred, probably formed part of the possessions which Cynegils gave for the original endowment of the see. The authority already quoted adds: "It is reasonable to suppose that Berinus and the missionary clergy he deputed from Dorchester here

preached the Gospel; and the tradition still remains.”¹ So, too, another writer well versed in the history of the district alludes to the connection of “St. Berrin” with this hill, “where local tradition says he had a cell.”²

There is yet a third spot in this district with which St. Berin’s name has been associated. If we follow on upon the same eastward course across the Chilterns towards the valley of the lower Thames and London, it leads us by the Roman potteries of Stoke Row and the cherry-orchards which the Romans planted here,³ till it crosses the river again at Henley and then again at Maidenhead. This last crossing brings us to Taplow, the hill which rises abruptly from the river-bank at the southern end of the Chiltern district of Buckinghamshire. The spot is familiar to travellers on the Great Western Railway looking northward from Maidenhead Bridge. On the slopes of this hill, in the “Bury Fields,” the remains of a British stronghold have been discovered, and numerous prehistoric relics have been unearthed above and below. On the summit, overshadowed by the modern mansion of Taplow Court, is the old churchyard of the parish, from which a Norman church was removed in the early part of the nineteenth century. Conspicuous in the churchyard is a lofty tumulus, on which stood till lately a decayed yew tree of extreme antiquity. The mound has been explored, and was found to contain the body of a Saxon chieftain—presumably one Tæpa whose *hlaw* or mound gives the name to the village—clothed in rich robes and

¹ Ms. notes by the late Mr. Edward Anderdon Reade of Ipsden House.

² Rev. T. Williams in *Records of Buckinghamshire*, VII., p. 348 (1896).

³ Ms. notes by Mr. E. A. Reade.

adorned with costly jewels, his knife and spear and shield beside him, while drinking-horns tipped with silver, and beautiful vases of sage-green glass, and the wooden buckets of his war-vessel cased in embossed bronze work, were all laid around him. Here then we have another site of primitive occupation as well as an ancient burial-place, and this was consecrated certainly from Norman times, and doubtless at an earlier date, for Christian rites. Just below this churchyard, in a field called "Bapsey Meadow," is a pond, formed in a stratum of clay upon the hill-front and receiving a supply of unfailing water from the gravel above. It has been reported that this pond "is said by local tradition to have been that in which heathen Saxons were baptised by St. Berinus."¹ But for this there is no foundation² beyond the fact that the name of the meadow seems to imply a place of primitive baptism, and it is very probable that the saint may have penetrated thus far westward. His duties, indeed, may have brought him from time to time along this route on the way to London. At any rate the suggestion corresponds with the traditions of the two places with which his name is connected; for this, like each of those, is a spot on the ridge of the hills bearing traces of having possessed a sacred character in primitive times.

It has been supposed that the king and his thanes first met the missionary on Churn Hill "because they thought that there they would be safer against magical arts";³ for these would be less potent in the fresh

¹ *Records of Buckinghamshire*, V., p. 331 (1884).

² The writer of the paper was misled by a casual remark to record this "tradition."

³ Crake's *Stories of the Old Saints*, p. 105.

breezes of the hill-top than in the valley below ; just as Ethelbert would only consent to receive Augustine in the open air.¹ Possibly this may be a sufficient account of St. Berin's first preaching to Cynegils ; but it does not explain his choice of Churn Knob as a place for continued preaching, and still less his further choice of "Berin's Hill." We must look for some more adequate explanation.

It is now generally admitted that in various parts of the country a considerable remnant of the conquered race still lived on, long after the Saxon invasion, and indeed that they were never exterminated. The Britons, says Sir Francis Palgrave, "appear to have existed either as distinct communities, intermixed in townships among the victors, or as a distinct people in larger territories, divided from the tracts inhabited by their Saxon lords ; and in all cases they were probably much more numerous than is usually supposed." He goes on to illustrate this by a quaint story of St. Guthlac, the hermit of Croyland, in the early years of the eighth century, that "his cell was surrounded at night by a crowd of enemies, and from their rough and guttural speech he imagined them to be Britons, by whom the country was so much harassed. To Guthlake's great satisfaction they proved to be only devils and not Welshmen."²

Berin's Hill is upon the Chilterns, where certainly the Briton lingered long after he had been driven from the neighbouring valley. All along these hills we find a trace of the older language in the hollow "combes," like

¹ Bede, I. 25.

² *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, Anglo-Saxon period, Vol. I., p. 462.

the *cwms* of Wales and Cumberland. It had practically become a Saxon word, but it is found more especially in districts where the British element was strong.¹ This implies that as a general rule the Saxons only adopted it where they heard Britons using it. In such localities, finding a depression in the hills known to the natives as *Cwm*, they took the word, usually with some distinctive affix or suffix, to serve as a place-name. Thus we have here, in close succession, Postcombe, Watcombe, Swyncombe, and Huntercombe in Oxfordshire; Wycombe and another Huntercombe in Buckinghamshire. And about the other traditional site of St. Berin's preaching, on the Berkshire Downs which form the westward continuation of the same range of hills, we have near Churn Knob the "combe" of Compton, and Tadcombe is close by, and further west are Letcombe and another Compton. But the most significant combe of all is upon the bank of the Thame river, some three miles above Dorchester, where a ridge shooting across the valley from the Chilterns and dividing itself into a fork towards the river encloses a deep depression; and there a hamlet called Holcombe forms the chief part of the village on one side, while on the other side the church and rectory with the glebe farm and the great house are known as Newington—or, in a deed of the tenth century, Niwentune²—the one a spot where the older race were still found in their "hollow combe," the other dominating over it as the "Newen-ton," or town of the new men. All this serves to strengthen the evidence that the older race were not extinguished here after the Saxon settlement.

¹ Taylor, *Words and Places*, p. 151.

² See Parker's *Architectural Guide to the Neighbourhood of Oxford*, p. 325.

There are some significant legends also at Long Compton on the Warwickshire side of the Edgehill range which forms the opposite boundary of Oxfordshire. About a mile from the village are the Rollright Stones, the remains of an ancient circle, with a taller one called the King Stone standing near them and commanding a view of all the neighbourhood; but you must step a few yards further to see Long Compton. The popular myth tells that these are the petrified remains of a chieftain and his warriors, and if he could have seen Long Compton he would have been king of England.¹ Such a story seems to be a reminiscence of a conquest by some invading warrior who had made himself master of the district with the exception of a single stronghold of the natives, and the name of Compton marks it as a "combe" of the Briton. There is also the ghastly tale, told in the Jervaulx Chronicle,² of St. Augustine's preaching in Oxfordshire when he comes to "Cumpton," and the priest complains to him that the lord of the place obstinately refuses to pay his tithe; whereupon, as the prelate celebrates Mass in the church and bids all excommunicate persons to depart, a dead man arises from the churchyard, and being questioned by Augustine, makes answer that he had been lord of the place before the English came and had died excommunicate for refusing to pay tithe, and being questioned again he points out the grave of the priest who had banned him; this priest also arises at Augustine's bidding and endorses the story; and then, at the same bidding, absolves the sinner, and both return to their graves,

¹ Falkner's *Hist. of Oxfordshire*, p. 15.

² Twysden, *Decem Script.*, 736.

while the astonished English lord acknowledges his error and becomes a devout son of the Church. The writer forgets that if Augustine came into the Midlands he could not have found a priest of English race. But the story may have its grain of value as implying that the Church of the Briton was not a thing unknown to the conquerors.

At the head of the Chiltern Valley, too, the name of Aylesbury—the “Æglesburh” of the Saxon Chronicle—would contain a striking testimony to the survival of some remembrance of the older Christianity under Saxon rule, if it could be rightly interpreted to be Eglwys-burh, or “burgh of the church,” in which the Welsh Eglwys was the prominent feature.¹ And at the bottom of this valley, on the Thames, the one place which certainly bears in a saxonised form its pre-Saxon name is Dorchester.

We are not told that St. Berin himself had a voice in the selection of Dorchester as the seat of his bishopric. If it were so, it is reasonable to suppose that coming from Rome he would feel a natural desire to make his home in an old Roman town rather than in any settlement of Saxon origin. But it is highly probable that with the survival of its British name Dorchester may have contained a survival of the British race, with some recollections of their faith, sufficient to attract the special attention of a Christian missionary.

“Whenever the cities were spared,” writes Bishop Stubbs, “a portion at least of the city population

¹ Green, *Making of England*, p. 119. But it must be admitted that the derivation of the name from a Saxon, Ægil, is more probable.

must have continued also. In the country too, especially towards the west and the debatable border, great numbers of Britons may have survived in servile or half-servile condition ; some few of the greater men may have made, and probably did make, terms for themselves, especially in the districts appropriated by the smaller detachments of adventurers ; and the public lands of the new kingdoms must have required native cultivators.”¹ And although, as the bishop points out further, there was no “general commixture or amalgamation of the races,” yet there were particular districts in which the subjugated people were strong enough to bring about this result, as in the newer Wessex beyond Selwood and in the Mercian territory. We have some evidence, though scarcely more than conjectural, of Saxons and Britons having thus eventually coalesced in the district to which St. Berin had come ; for there seems to have been a people known as Midmen or Middlers, who gave their name to Medmenham on the lower Thames, and from thence threw across the hills a line of earthworks terminating in the “Medlers’ Bank” at Bensington, three miles from Dorchester.² They may well have been a mixed race between the Saxons of the open country and the Britons whose last refuge was in the southern extremity of the Chilterns. And in 880 “six men who belonged to the royal vill in Beonsinctune, with all their offspring and posterity,” were transferred together with a grant of certain lands to the church of “Readenor” by Ethelred, duke of the Mercians.³ Being

¹ *Constitutional History of England*, ch. iv., p. 67 (1883).

² *Berks, Bucks and Oxon. Archaeological Journal*, Vol. II. (1896), p. 49.

³ Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, II. 547, p. 167. See above, p. 95.

thus distinctly slaves, it may be presumed that they were of the conquered race.¹ But their names, given in the charter, are for the most part Saxon—Alhmund, Tidulf, Tidheh, Lull, Lull, and Eadwulf. This is explained if they belonged to a mixed race—the Midmen. And if there is evidence of the existence of such a race it is good proof that the surviving Britons hereabouts had been numerous.

The general condition of things in this district was probably not different from that which existed at the same period in the northern parts of England. The Bishop of Bristol has suggested that the considerable number of Britons who remained in and about Yorkshire may have been the reason which led to the choice of Paulinus for their missionary, if, as there are good grounds for believing, he was himself a Briton of royal race, and identical with the "Rum map Urbgen" of whom Nennius writes; for "it was not so very long since Christianity had been openly practised in the northern parts among the Britons," and it is tolerably certain that Thadioc, "the last British bishop of York before the expulsion of the Christians," was still there "up to about sixty years before the preaching of Paulinus"; and therefore "practically all the grown men and women of the Britons, who were still in numbers in the remote valleys, and in no inconsiderable number scattered among the Angles in the plains and the less inaccessible parts, were the children of men and women in whose time Christianity was a recognised religion, to whom indeed it was the one true religion."²

¹ Pearman, *Hist. of Bensington*, p. 6.

² *Lessons from Early English Church History*, by the Rev. G. F. Browne (1893), pp. 55-57. See Nennius, 63, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, XI. 10.

Similarly in this district of Oxfordshire, during the sixty-four years which had elapsed between the Saxon Conquest in 571 and the coming of St. Berin, the ancient faith cannot have been entirely lost. All the facts, therefore, taken together seem to point strongly to the inference that places where a British remnant lingered were chosen by St. Berin for the beginnings of his apostolic work. And if this is so, it forms one of those valuable links which churchmen must gladly recognise between the Church of the English and the older Church of Britain.

If there is any value in the suggestion which has added Taplow Hill in Buckinghamshire as a third traditional site of St. Berin's missionary labours with Churn Knob in Berkshire and Berin's Hill in Oxfordshire, it is interesting to note that we have one such spot in each of the three counties which are included in the modern diocese of Oxford—a diocese which originally, from its foundation in 1542, consisted of the county of Oxford, and therefore was practically a revival of the Dorchester bishopric; while Berkshire, a portion of the old West Saxon bishopric, was severed from Salisbury and added to Oxford in 1836, and Buckinghamshire, a portion of the old Mercian bishopric, was severed from Lincoln and added to this in 1845.

CHAPTER VIII

ST. BERIN'S MIRACLES

"O petra Petre, super quam stat stabitque per ævum
E celis fundata fides, si dicere fas est,
Pace tua dicam, tuus iste vicarius audet
Per mare de titulo fidei contendere tecum.
In quo præcellis omnes cessisse videris
Huic uni, dum te sequitur super equor euntem.
Navis utrique fides; sed tempestate timoris
Absorbente tuam, te cepit mergere fluctus:
Hunc autem mare non potuit demergere, cujus
Firma fides, omni manus inconcussa timore."

Alexander Essebiensis, 351-360.

SEVERAL of the mediæval accounts of St. Berin attribute to him the performance of one or more acts of a miraculous character. If such stories have no other value, they serve at least to show us what manner of man the saint was thought to be in the centuries which preceded and followed the Norman Conquest; and in this case they have an additional interest, since we can trace more or less clearly the manner in which they originated and the germ of fact out of which they grew.

It will be convenient to take as a basis the account from the Life which is contained in the collections of Capgrave and Surius, and to notice the other accounts in connection with it. It has been observed already

that the compiler of Capgrave's Life was less scrupulous about relating fact than about exalting the papal power. He follows Bede, but speaks of Birin being "ordained bishop by Pope Honorius"; and, omitting the mention of his consecration by Asterius at Genoa, he substitutes the story of his celebrating Mass before embarking, and afterwards walking back upon the sea to find a corporal which he had left behind. Surius' version of the Life is corrected, omitting the false account of the saint's consecration and inserting the true account of it in the words of Bede, after which it proceeds with the story of the Mass and the miracle.

The legend is told as follows :

"When he reached the shore of the British sea and was about to go up into the ship he celebrated the divine mysteries, preparing the viaticum for himself and those that were with him, and offering to God the pious oblations of the Saving Victim. As the moment for sailing was urgent, he was brought hurriedly into the ship; and when the wind arose, while they were ploughing the depths of the sea, Birin remembered that he had lost something which was very dear to him and had left it on the shore that he started from while he was embarrassed by the urgency of the sailors. For Pope Honorius had given him a pall, on which he consecrated the Body of Christ, and he always carried with him the Lord's Body wrapped up in it and suspended from his neck, and in consecrating the sacred mysteries it was his custom to lay it on the holy altar. Armed therefore with faith he descended upon the sea, walked safely through the sea with God for his guide, and recovering what he had left he returned to the ship. Then he found the ship standing as if immovable, though he had left it awhile before speeding swiftly through the waves.

And when he came into the ship he was found to have upon his clothing not a single drop of moisture."

This passage appears in almost the same words in the older Life and in Bromton's Chronicle, and it is versified in the Metrical Life. But in the first-named of these it is amplified with a variety of embellishments, and spun out to four times its length. For example, the writer magnifies the saint's courage in venturing on the voyage, giving the sea all imaginable horrors including the "ill-famed rocks" and "monstrous animals" of Horace's famous ode to the ship that carried Virgil; and he brings in various Scriptural allusions, as that "there was fulfilled in the saint what Solomon said of the love of the Church: Many waters cannot quench love, neither shall the floods drown it;" and again, that "the Lord Who divided the sea for the people of Israel, that they might walk safely in the sea by dry land, granted also to this true Israelite that he should go through the abyss of the sea unharmed."

The story is told more briefly by Malmesbury thus:

"And when he was putting together his little things (*rescellas*)¹ into packages, while the sailors hurried him because of the seasonable wind, he forgot his corporals, as they are called (*corporalia quæ dicuntur*). But when he had now put out to sea, and the ship was happily ploughing the calm water, he recollected his loss and hesitated. If he appealed to the sailors to return they would doubtless laugh at him, because the voyage was favourable; if he said nothing, he would suffer the loss of the apostolic gift. Therefore he roused up courage-

¹ See Du Cange's *Glossarium*. The word is a diminutive of *res*, but used commonly of personal possessions, and particularly of clothing, or, in one instance (*Vita S. Ottonis* in *Acta Sanctorum*, Julii tom. I., p. 426), of the covers of a book.

ously all the weapons of his faith and descended on foot upon the sea, and ran quickly to the shore which he had left. There he found the corporals; and taking them to him, and repeating a second time his act of happy daring, he returned to his companions, dispersing by his faith the heaving waves and the thousand deaths that met him. They, moreover, softened by so great a miracle, had cast anchor and stopped the ship."

But Malmesbury omits what was no doubt the main point of the story in its original form. The object of the saint's anxiety was evidently, in the older accounts, not the corporal or pall itself, but this with "the Lord's Body wrapped up in it." It appears still more clearly in the Hyde Chronicle :

"While he was ploughing the British sea, he remembered his little things which we call corporals (*rescellarum suarum quas corporalia vocamus*), in which was contained (*reconditum erat*) that venerable Sacrament of the Lord's Body, and which in forgetfulness he had left behind at the port : and he went on foot over the sea, following in this Peter the prince of the apostles, and brought the little things (*rescellas*) back to the ship, which was labouring on the stormy waves a long distance from him."

Malmesbury makes no mention whatever of the Sacrament of the Lord's Body, but only speaks of the saint missing his corporal, which he calls an "apostolic gift." He knew therefore the story of Honorius having given it, as told in the fuller accounts, but he supposed that the pope's gift was what the saint chiefly missed.

Higden's *Polychronicon* has the story in the briefest form of all. He knew it as the Hyde Chronicle has it, and while he abbreviates it he follows, as far as he goes,

the exact words. It will be sufficient to give it in Trevisa's contemporary version.

"While Birinus seilede in the see of Britayne he by-thoughte hym of his restelles that he hadde forghete in the haven and ghede uppon the see and fette his restelles."

The *rescellæ* (little things) puzzles Trevisa, and he leaves the word untranslated.

The blunder about these "little things" is very curious. The original story, represented by the fuller accounts, had been written at an earlier date, when the term *palla* was applied to the linen cloth which was afterwards called *corporale* or *corporalia*.¹ This story related that on the voyage the saint recollected that he had lost the *palla* with that which it contained. A later version, followed by Malmesbury, substituted the word *corporals* (*corporalia quæ dicuntur*), and inserted the statement that St. Berin forgot them "when he was putting together his little things into parcels," and he crossed the water and brought back with him "the corporals." Malmesbury reads it correctly; but the Hyde Chronicler writes of "the little things which we call corporals," misunderstanding the word *rescellæ*, and taking it apparently as an obsolete word for "corporals." So he repeats it: "he brought back his *rescellæ*." Similarly, Higden speaks twice of the "*rescellæ*," but without any explanation, and Trevisa gives up the enigma and lets it stand in English as "restelles." The other English translator, attempting an explanation, only blunders still more:

¹ See Du Cange, "*Palla quam corporale vocabant*," quoting Aimoinus in *Mirac. S. Benedicti*, "*Palla super quam pridie sacrosanctum corpus Jesu Christi fuerat confectum*."

"Seynte Birine the confessor . . . beyng in the see and havynge remembraunce of certeyne thinges of his lefte in the haven wher he toke schippe, wente on his feete on the see and broughte *the wrytynge* to the schippe."

But the true meaning of the legend is obvious. It was not the corporal—whether the gift of Honorius or not—that the saint so strongly desired to recover, but it was the outward token of the Saviour's presence wrapped in the corporal. And if this is the original point of the story, its purpose is apparent. Both at Dorchester where St. Berin sat as bishop, and at Winchester where his body was removed, St. Peter was regarded with special veneration; for in each place he was the principal saint to whom the church was dedicated. Hence the story is fabricated to exalt the patron saint to an equality with the great apostle. It is an imitation of what we read of St. Peter in St. Matthew xiv. 28, 29: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee upon the water: and He said, Come: And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus." So the Hydé Chronicler says of St. Berin: "In this he imitated Peter, the prince of the apostles." And the writer of the eleventh-century Life enlarges upon this thought:

"Lo, what the Lord of old wrought in Peter, He works now in Peter's vicar: what He showed of old in the Master He now wills to repeat in the disciple. Peter is set firmly on the Rock of the faith. With his feet upon the sea he comes to the Rock, to Him Who had conferred on him a participation in His own Name, since upon him He would build His Church. For from the Rock Peter received his name, and, as the apostle saith, the Rock was Christ."

Alexander of Ashby, or whoever was the metrical paraphrast, extols St. Berin's faith as exceeding that of St. Peter, in the lines which stand at the head of this chapter.

The variations in the different versions of the story seem to show that most of the accounts which have come down to us had their origin from a common source, which each writer used and adorned in his own way. The Hyde Chronicle, for example, does not borrow directly from Malmesbury, nor Malmesbury from Goscelin's Life. Malmesbury says that Birin refrained from telling the sailors his trouble lest they should laugh at him, while the Life says that "he consulted the sailors" and "made them many promises" in vain ; and we may suppose that if he thought it worth while to record one such marvel from the Life he would hardly have omitted the others which, as we shall see, are added there. Again, the Book of Hyde says that the saint found the ship "toiling upon the stormy waves," while the Life says that he found it standing still and waiting for him, neither sail nor oar being able to move it ; and Malmesbury says that the sailors, seeing the miracle, had stopped the ship. All this seems to afford clear evidence that the story existed in an earlier and simpler form.

One would like to think that the inventor of the story which has come down to us was not guilty of deliberate falsehood. We may suppose him to have read that the saint had received a pall from Honorius as a token of his favour, and that before embarking he had celebrated Mass for a safe voyage ; that when he was at sea he felt himself to be leaving behind him all outward tokens of Christ's Presence and going to lands where the Lord was unknown ;

that in his depression he bethought him of asking the sailors to return, and in his heart he went back again; and thus that he was like St. Peter who "walked on the water to go to Jesus, and when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid," but the answer came to him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" and he conquered his difficulties and resolved to persevere. Possibly some such account as this may have been innocently transformed into the story of the miracle. But it is not easy to regard it otherwise than as being, at least in part, a wilful fabrication.

In the *History of Winchester*, by John Milner (Roman Catholic bishop of Castabala), published at Winchester in 1809, we are told of this miracle that "the prodigy is so well attested by the most judicious historians that those who have had the greatest interest to deny it have not dared openly to do so." His reference is to "William of Malmesbury, Florence of Worcester, Ranulph Higden, John Bromton, Capgrave, etc."¹ But Worcester cannot be claimed for it; and the writer omits to add that it is not mentioned by Huntingdon, Diceto, Wendover, Gloucester, Rudborne, nor in the Breviary Lection, to say nothing of Bede and the Saxon Chronicle. As writers who "have not dared" to deny it, he quotes John Foxe (*Acts and Monuments*) and Godwin. But Foxe marvels at so many authors recording it "if it be fable, as no doubt it is,"² and Godwin in his notice of the saint makes no allusion to it. Alban Butler too, in his *Life of the saint*, wisely passes it by unnoticed.

¹ Milner's *Winchester*, I. 89.

² Milner evidently trusted to an imperfect quotation from Foxe in Cressy's *Church History* (1668), XVI. iv., p. 350.

Capgrave's Life goes on to tell us the sequel of the miracle, saying that "when the sailors saw it they bowed their knees and worshipped him as God; and when he preached to them the Word of God many of them were converted to the faith of Christ." Bromton freely enlarges upon this:

"He blessed water and then sprinkled it over them and they were baptised, professing with heart and mouth the faith of the Holy Trinity. A deep sleep being sent upon them from God, not one of all that multitude save the bishop alone remained awake. But He Who shall neither slumber nor sleep guided the ship's course, and they came to the desired haven."

In Goscelin's Life the story is told for the most part in the same words as in Bromton, but with the usual lengthy amplifications and with the insertion of another marvel.

"While they sleep the ship is brought to the haven which they were seeking, and it could not suffer shipwreck since it was guided by divine leadership. Meanwhile blessed Birin went up into the pilot's place, having been newly made a skilled sailor, so that he could direct the ship through the waves of the sea corporally as he was to direct the Church through the billows and storms of the world spiritually."

The three Lives of St. Berin and Bromton's Chronicle proceed to relate a second miracle, of which Malmesbury, Higden, and the Hyde Chronicle tell us nothing. The following is the account in Capgrave's Life:

"There was in the same province a certain aged woman who for long time past could neither see nor hear; and it was revealed to her in a vision that she should hasten

quickly to the blessed prelate to receive healing. The woman therefore arose and found a guide to direct her steps; and the bishop, seeing her, was moved with pity and made the sign of the Cross upon her ears and eyes: and speedily the blindness is taken away and her sight is restored; the deafness is cured and her hearing is renewed."

The same story appears with more prolix details in Bromton; and Bromton's account, amplified still more, is found in Goscelin's *Life*, where also, among the other additions, we are told that the aged woman was changed into a young girl again.

There is one variation in the story. Capgrave's *Life* says that it happened in the province of the *Gewissæ*, inserting it in the middle of Bede's account between St. Berin's arrival and the baptism of Cynegils; and the *Metrical Life* follows the same order. But the others say that after the miracle he went on to the land of the *Gewissæ*, and thus proceed with Bede's account. Evidently in the common original from which the four writers derive it the miracle had been added as an afterthought.

The explanation of the story is sufficiently obvious. An early account of the saint said that he gave to this land the blessings of spiritual sight and hearing and the new birth; and another writer, whether deliberately or inadvertently, read the account of the land as of a woman, and so threw the description of the saint's spiritual work into this grotesque form. May not the mistake perhaps have been due to the use of the obsolete term *Gewissas*,¹ which some one may have confused with a woman's

¹ See p. 61.

name? This is perhaps the more probable, since the Chronicle gives the name of *Gewis* as the great-grandfather of Cerdic and sixth in descent from Woden.¹

We are able to trace something of the growth of the story. Bede says that when Birin came to the Gewissæ "he found all in that place most pagan, and thought it more profitable to preach the Word there rather than to go forward and seek those to whom he ought to preach." Malmesbury paraphrases it :

"As soon as he landed he found all in that place obstinately given up to sacrilegious rites, and therefore it seemed foolish to advance further and to seek for sick whom he might heal, when he found no whole person there."

Malmesbury may well be following some earlier writer who had used similar figurative language. And this explanation of the legend is borne out by the words of the Hyde Chronicler, who writes thus :

"Among the many notable things of the angelic man, these two are eminent, namely that he marked the province of the Gewisei and its king with the impress of the faith, and that being sent by Pope Honorius to preach to the idolaters of the English . . . he went on foot upon the sea," etc.

Of these "two notable things" (*insignia*)—namely the success of the saint's preaching to the Gewissas and the voyage across the sea which brought him to it—the latter had become an actual miracle in the authority which this chronicler followed, while the authority upon which the Lives of the saint are based had made both into miracles.

¹ A.S. Chr., a° 552.

It remains to append the story as we have it in the Metrical Life.

"The pope a litel lynen cloth.
 as it a pors wer.
 Tok him with our lordis flesch.
 that he with him ber.
 Aboute his nekke where he com.
 that folk to ler.¹
 For of nothyng the devel hath.
 on erthe so gret fer.
 Tho² seint Beryn cam to the se.
 he wolde him noght indo.³
 Er he hadde his masse y-songe.
 and his other beden⁴ al so.
 Tho this masse was y-do.⁵
 in so gret haste he was.
 That he forgat behynde this cloth.
 as it were by cas.⁶
 And our lordes flesch and his blod.
 ther yinne was y-brought.
 That he and his felawes.
 it havede al mest y-boght.⁷
 For tho hy⁸ come in to the se.
 the tempest wax anon.
 And caste her⁹ schip wel grisliche.¹⁰
 that hy wende to drenche echon.¹¹
 Seint Beryn thocht him anon.
 that he forgat be hynde.
 And bad the schipmen turne agein.
 gif he it myghte fynde.
 And thulke bone¹² was for noght.
 for eche sore hem was more.¹³
 Tho seint Beryn sey non other.¹⁴
 he tok to godis lore.
 He step him out of the ship.
 and tok al to godis sonde.¹⁵

¹ *lehren*, teach.

⁴ bedes, prayers.

⁶ chance.

⁸ when they.

¹¹ they went drenched each one.

¹³ each pain to them was greater [than the last].

¹⁴ when St. Beryn saw no other [course].

¹⁵ took all as being God's sending.

² when.

⁵ when . . . was done.

⁷ Had almost paid dearly for it.

⁹ their.

³ enter.

⁵ when . . . was done.

⁷ Had almost paid dearly for it.

¹⁰ grisly, terribly.

¹² that boon, petition.

And geóde upon the depe se.
 as a dreye londe.
 And fette our lordis flesch.
 and that cloth al so.
 And wente agein upon the se.
 as he hadde er y-do.
 To the schip he wente agein.
 and fond it right there.
 For al the tempest gret.
 as he leved it er.¹
 Wel softe he step in agein.
 wel drye and wel clene.
 Ther uas non so litel clout of him.
 that wer y-wet ene.²
 Alle that in the schip were.
 tho hy this y-seye.³
 Helde him an holyman.
 and some wep with eye.
 And hy that were mysbyleved.
 and of the olde lawe.
 Turnde to Jesu Crist.
 as they aughte fawe.⁴
 Thei honorede this holy man.
 as hy aughte wel echon.
 For among manye fair meracle.
 me thenketh this is on.
 So that for the grete travaille.
 that hy hadde in y-beo.
 Hy were fawe⁵ of reste and pes.⁶
 that hy myghte the tyme y-seo.
 So that hy gonne slepe.
 and caughte reste echone.
 Ther uas non wakyng.
 bote saint Beryn alone.
 And natheles hem spedde wel y-nough.
 bet than thei hy woke.⁷
 For tho⁸ hy awoke furst.
 hy gonne⁹ aboute loke.
 And founde her schip softeliche.
 at an hâvene stonde.
 As our lord it hadde y-sent.
 her in engelonde.

¹ left it before.² wetted even.³ when they this saw.⁴ fain, gladly.⁵ fain.⁶ peace.⁷ better than when they were awake.⁸ when.⁹ they began.

Hy uer noght a litel glad.
 al they helde op her honde.
 And honourede seint Beryn.
 and our lordis sonde.¹
 This holyman seint Beryn.
 in oure lordis name.
 Wentte forthe wel baldeliche.²
 and by gan anywe³ game.
 And as our lordis hardy knyght.
 prechid cristendom.
 That folk sone herde him wel.
 and thikke aboute him com.⁴
 * * * * *
 A woman both blynd and def.
 wonede⁵ ther be side.
 Bote⁶ myghte she fynde non.
 and thei⁷ she soghte wide.
 So that in a vision.
 a nyght to hir it com.
 That she sholde seche seint Beryn.
 that spak of cristendom.
 This woman tho⁸ she awakede.
 ne forgat it noght.
 Reste uolde she have non.
 er she was to him y-broght.
 She criede on him to helpe hir.
 gif it his wille wer.
 Seint Beryn hir made to have.
 hir eyen and hire ere.
 And heledde hir befor al the folk.
 that men wondrede y-nough.
 And honoured him swithe moche.⁹
 and about him drough.¹⁰
 And for the meracle and many other.
 turnde to cristendom.
 And thorgh seint Berines prechyng.
 the righte wey nom.¹¹

¹ sending.² boldly.³ a new.⁴ The lines about St. Austin's converts follow. See p. 65.⁵ *wohnte*, dwelt.⁶ Boot, advantage (as in *bootless*, *to boot*).⁷ though.⁸ when.⁹ very much.¹⁰ drew.¹¹ took.

CHAPTER IX

THE DEATH OF ST. BERIN

“Conversis tandem multo sudore Britannis
Sanctus Birinus naturæ debita solvens
Occidit ut surgat, moritur ne vivere cesset.
Pontificique suo celestia regna recludit
Christus, et ejus opus mercede remunerat ampla,
Restituens illi per luctum gaudia, per spem
Rem, perque exilium patriam, per funera vitam.”
Alexander Essebiensis, 634-640.

AT Dorchester, says Bede, “after he had built and dedicated churches, and called many peoples to God by his pious labour, he departed to the Lord and was buried in the same city.”

The one copy of the Saxon Chronicle which records the death of St. Berin—a late edition, written in the twelfth century—places it under the year 650: “*Her forthferde Birinus se biscop.*”¹ And in the Annals of Chichester, of the same period, we find under that year the entry: *Obitus Birini.*² This date has been generally accepted by historians, but it requires investigation. It is at least certain that “he died in or before 650.”³

Meanwhile it must be noted that the day on which

¹ Ms. Cott. Domit. A. viii. See Rolls Edition, p. 51.

² Ms. Cott. Vitell. A. xvii., in Liebermann, *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen*, p. 86.

³ Bp. Stubbs in *Dict. of Christian Biography*, Art. *Birinus*.

the saint "forth-fared" was, according to the various Kalendars and Martyrologies in which he is commemorated, December 3; and that day is assigned to him in the Winchester Kalendar written in the year 867.¹

The Chronicle which mentions his death adds also the appointment of his successor, "Ægebert the Frenchman was hallowed" (*Ægebertus se Frencisca was gehahod*). But this last statement is plainly wrong, for Agilbert, as we learn from Bede, was already a bishop, and must therefore have been hallowed at some previous time. It is to be noticed, too, that the name Ægelbert is misspelt, and also that both the names are latinised (*Birinus*, *Ægebertus*), suggesting that the entry is derived from some Latin source. It is clearly independent of the older copies of the Chronicle, which speak of "*Ægelbriht of Galwalum, æfter Birine*," and say correctly that he "took the bishopric" (*onfeng Wesseaxna biscopdome*).

The early Winchester copy of the Chronicle gives this entry under the year 650, and is followed in that respect by Florence of Worcester and Malmesbury, the former adding "after Birin was dead" (*defuncto jam Birino*). But the three other copies of the Chronicle assign the appointment of Ægelbriht to the previous year, 649. The difference is readily reconciled if we suppose that St. Berin died December 3, 649; that Ægilbriht or Agilberct was appointed, as the ninth-century Chronicle states, in 650; and that the later copyists assumed the occurrence of both these events in the same year. In that case the tenth-century copyists, knowing that St. Berin died in 649, entered the appointment of Agilberct

¹ Bodl. Ms. Digby 63. See above, p. 45.

under that year; whereas the copyist of the twelfth century had the correct record of Agilberct's accession and inserted the mention of St. Berin's death with it in 650.¹

Rudborne, in his *History of Winchester*,² says that Birin died in 648. As he says also that it was December 3, it would seem that the authority which he followed had dated the appointment of Agilberct in 649. But he says at the same time that the saint's death was in the eighth year of King Cenwalh; and the earliest year to which Cenwalh's accession is referred is 641. And, further, Rudborne has previously said that Birin came to the Gewissæ in 635, and again that he came in the forty-first year after Augustine's coming (which he dates 594), and that he ruled the bishopric fourteen years. These figures seem to show that he must have lived until at least 649. The statement that his episcopate lasted fourteen years appears in Higden;³ and this also brings us to 649 as the date of his death.

Again, Bede tells us that "when Coinwalch had been restored to his kingdom, Agilberct came into the province"; as if there was but a short interval between these two events; and we have seen that Cenwalh's return was in 648. Bede's account, therefore, seems to imply an earlier date than 650 for St. Berin's death; for otherwise Agilberct cannot have been appointed until after December 3 of that year, and fully two years after Cenwalh's return.

If therefore the evidence does not actually disprove

¹ "This is a mere inference." Plummer's *Bede*, II., p. 146.

² *Angl. Sacr.*, pp. 190, 191.

³ *Polychronicon*, V. xiii. (Rolls Series, 41), Vol. VI., p. 4.

the statement of the twelfth-century Chronicle, that St. Berin died in 650, yet it points strongly to the probability that he died December 3, 649, and that Agilberct succeeded shortly after the commencement of the year 650. It should be remembered also that at this period the year was reckoned from Christmas Day, and not, as in the twelfth and following centuries, from Lady Day.¹

Bede tells us that the saint died and was buried at Dorchester; and Malmesbury, followed by Bromton, adds that he was buried in the church which he himself had built there. Thus we have it also in the concluding lines of the Metrical Life :

“Thei geve him the ton of Dorchestre.
 that is wyde couth.²
 Sixe myle be syde Oxsenforde.
 in the east south.
 A churche ther noble and hey.
 seint Beryn let rere.³
 And the se of bischopriche.
 he by gan al so there.
 And was there longe.
 the grete se, y wis.
 Of the bischopriche of many shyre.
 that now at Lyncolne is.
 Seint Beryn tornde there al that lond.
 to our lordis lay.⁴
 And suththe⁵ as godis wille was.
 endide there his day.
 And wente to the joye of hevene.
 after his lyf anon.
 Nou gode for the love of him.
 us bringe thuder echon.”⁶

History tells us nothing of the manner of St. Berin's death. But there is a local legend which, however worth-

¹ Sir Harris Nicolas, *Chronology of History*, p. 41.

² widely known. Compare *uncouth*, i. e. unknown, strange.

³ caused to be reared. ⁴ faith (*legem*, law). ⁵ afterwards.

⁶ thither each one.

less historically, is too curious to be passed over. The inscription on the tenor bell of Dorchester Abbey invokes the saint's perpetual protection for the worshippers whom it calls together.¹

A belief that the viper cannot endure the sound of this bell has lingered on till modern times. In Cox's *Magna Britannia*, 1727, we read, under *Dorchester* :

“There is a vulgar Tradition here that—

Within the Sound of the great Bell
No Snake or Adder e'er shall dwell.

And the reason given for it is that Birinus was stung to Death with Snakes, which to confirm, the oldest Men of the Place say they never saw any venomous Creature within that District, and have heard their Fathers say the same.”

Harmless snakes, however, are common enough ; but it is very true that the viper or adder is not to be found either here or elsewhere along the Thames valley, since it only frequents the drier ground of the neighbouring hills. And, accordingly, another form of the Dorchester story, as given by a writer who is well acquainted with the local superstitions, relates that St. Berin died from the bite of an adder in the Chiltern Woods.²

We may dismiss this story of St. Berin's death as a valueless adjunct to the myth of his bell keeping off the vipers, which connects itself with the fact of the Christian faith being first planted here. St. Berin doubtless drove the vipers from Dorchester as St. Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland and St. George slew the dragon.

¹ See below, ch. XII., p. 182.

² Rev. T. Williams, in *Records of Buckinghamshire*, Vol. VII., p. 349.

There is a curious parallel also between the myth of St. Berin's bell and the story of St. Patrick told in his *Life* by Goscelin.¹ During his forty days' fast on Mount Cruachanaigle in Connaught, when crowds of demons hovered over him in the form of black birds and tried to hinder his prayers by their horrible chattering, Patrick drove them off with the constant striking of his bell until he forced them to flee from Ireland; but he broke his bell in the effort, and though an angel mended it, the fracture was still visible in the writer's time.

Recollecting the prominent part which bells play in early ecclesiastical legends, we may suppose that the story of St. Berin and the vipers is probably of much higher antiquity than the present bell with which it is connected. Moreover, the principal ornament upon this bell is the figure of a horse, the famous Saxon emblem. This unusual design may well have been imitated from one of early date, superseded by this one in the fourteenth century; in which case St. Berin's bell itself may be practically as old as the legend.

This will also be the most convenient place to notice some more of the legendary matter that has grown up around St. Berin's name. The estimation in which his memory was held by mediæval writers is curiously illustrated by a passage in the *Life* of St. Frethmund, printed in Capgrave's *Nova Legenda Angliæ*. St. Frethmund was a royal hermit-saint of Warwickshire, and was martyred near Offchurch, and there buried, at the time of Hinguar's invasion, about the year 865. Sixty-six years later his body was removed to another resting-place, near the river Cherwell, and afterwards a pilgrim named

¹ *Acta Sanctorum*, March 17, p. 574.

Aelbert had a divine revelation at the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem directing him to return home "and find the precious treasure buried in a meadow beneath a willow-tree." He obtained the sanction of the pope, "and two priests went with Aelbert to Birin, bishop of Dorchester (*episcopum Dorscenstrensem Birinum*); they relate what had happened, and humbly present the pope's letter; wherefore the bishop with his attendants went to the place, opened the grave, and showed to all the astonished beholders the body of the glorious Fremund decorously wrapped in clothes; and in the same grave with the body they found English writings relating his life and passion."¹

To the mind of the writer of this story, St. Berin was the famous saint of the district, with whom any unusual manifestations and portents were naturally to be connected; but he forgot for the moment that he was writing of what happened three centuries after St. Berin's days. The story is mentioned again, with a bold attempt to bridge over the interval by putting St. Berin's date a century too late, in one of William of Worcester's documents, entitled "Notes of Chronicles transcribed from a Book of Chronicles from a Library at Thetford of the Order of Preachers," and dated 1479. It states that "Saint Birin the bishop baptised Cunegils king of the Mercians in the year of Christ 736, who caused Saint Fremund to be translated with the pope's license the 28th day of March."²

We find also an illustration of the mediæval belief in St. Berin's miraculous powers from a story preserved in the

¹ *Nov. Leg. Angl.* (1516), ff. cli, clii.

² Nasmyth's *Itinerary of William of Worcester*, p. 303.

History of Allcheſter, written in 1622 and published by White Kennett in his *Parochial Antiquities* in 1695. Describing Dorcheſter, the writer mentions “a round hill there ſtill appearing where the ſuperſtitious enſuing ages built Birinus a ſhrine, teaching them that had any cattle amiſs to creep to that ſhrine for help.”¹ This may be paralleled by Bede’s deſcription of ſomething ſimilar for St. Chad at Lichfield; though in that caſe it was within the church:

“The place of his ſepulchre is covered with a wooden monument, made like a ſmall dwelling-houſe, having an opening in the wall, through which thoſe who come there for the ſake of devotion are wont to put in their hand and take out ſome of the duſt, and when they have put this in water and given it to ſick beaſts or men to drink, the diſtreſs of their infirmity will preſently be removed and they will return to the happineſs of the health which they deſired.”²

It is natural that attempts ſhould be made to connect St. Berin’s name with places in the diſtrict where any circumſtance might ſeem to ſuggeſt ſuch a connection. We have a myth of this kind in the ſame *History of Allcheſter*, and it has been repeated by other writers. The town of Biceſter, ſixteen miles north of Dorcheſter, is there deſcribed as “the town that Birinus, biſhop of Caer Dor, now Dorcheſter . . . built about 630 years after Chriſt, calling it after his name Birinceſter, and contractly Birſter”: and a little later it is ſpoken of as “Caer Birin, now called Birceſter”; and again, “Birſter . . . which Birinus built to withſtand the incuſions of

¹ Kennett, II., p. 417 (ed. 1818).

² Bede, *H. E.*, IV. 3.

the Danes and other pagans.”¹ But the first invasion of the Danes was nearly a century and a half after St. Berin’s time ; another century had nearly passed before they penetrated into the midland districts, and the only “other pagans” that could have been in the writer’s mind were the Mercians. It is needless to say that this etymology of the name of Bicester is merely fanciful. Older forms of it were Burenceaster and Bernacester,² which apparently connect the town with the neighbouring Bernwood Forest. Certainly it affords no ground for regarding the saint as a fortress-builder aiding the West Saxons against the Mercians.

¹ Kennett, II., pp. 417, 423.

² Dunkin, *History of Bicester* (1816), p. 1.

CHAPTER X

THE ENSHRINEMENT

“Quintus Birini successor episcopus Edda
Ejus honorandum Ventanam corpus in urbem
Magnifice transfert, et collocat in cathedrali
Ecclesia : tumuloque diu requievit in illo,
Donec Adelwoldus, qui mox successit eidem
Vigesimus sextus, fulvo levat illud in auro,
Reliquiisque novis altare refulgurat altum.
In quo crebra loco fulgent miracula sancti
Birini precibus ; fugiunt fantasmata, cedunt
Languores ; ceci claudos ibi cernere possunt
Currentes, surdi mutos audire loquentes ;
Quid loquor ? omne mali genus evanescit in auras.
Presulis ista sui meritis dat premia Christus
Rex regum ; cum quo sit Patri Spirituique
Sancto majestas et gloria nunc et in evum. Amen.”
Alexander Essebiensis, 641-655.

THE last clauses of the *Lectio de Sancto Birino* in the York Breviary are as follows :

“But after numerous churches had been dedicated and many peoples had been called to the Lord, he yielded to human nature and departed to the Lord. And being buried in the city of his bishopric, he rested there a long time. And after many years, when the bishopric was governed by Edda who succeeded him in it as fifth bishop, he was translated to the city of Wenta and honourably entombed in the church of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul. But after much time had

passed, blessed Adelwold, a very religious man, who succeeded twenty-sixth in the bishopric, raised the saintly body from the place where it had been laid, and placed it more honourably in the same church near the greater altar, to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The account of the translation to Winchester is taken from Bede. As the Saxon version circumstantially states it: "After many years Bishop Hædde caused his body to be taken up (*heht his lichoman upadon*) and carried to Winchester." We cannot fix precisely the number of the "many years" that it lay at Dorchester, nor would it be worth while to attempt the task were there not further questions of some interest depending upon it. The Saxon Chronicle states that Headda succeeded to the bishopric in 676; and according to a decree of Archbishop Theodore, as given by Rudborne,¹ his translation of St. Berin took place under the authority of Pope Agatho. He was pope from 678 to 682. The Winchester traditions also placed the event in the reign of Escuin, which however, according to the Saxon Chronicle, lasted only two years and ended in the year of Headda's consecration, 676. Rudborne places it in 677; but he is in direct conflict with the Chronicle when he says that it was the third year of Headda and the second of Escuin. He appears to base the date 677 on the authority of the older Winchester Annals,² which state that the see remained at Dorchester forty-two years, and that Headda translated it together with the saint's body to Winchester. But the other figures in these Annals are even more confusing than Rudborne's, for they give the year 683,

¹ *Hist. Maj. Winton.*, II. iii. (*Angl. Sacr.*, p. 193).

² *Angl. Sacr.*, p. 193, note.

and call it the tenth year of Headda, while at the same time by adding that it was the third year of Escuin they bear witness to the earlier date. This seems to show that the translation of St. Berin and the final removal of the bishop's see was one of the earliest acts of Headda's episcopate; and thus also a grave doubt is thrown upon Pope Agatho's connection with it, and the genuineness of the decree attributed to Theodore becomes increasingly improbable.

Rudborne in a later passage¹ tells us more particularly that the saint's burial-place at Winchester was "on the north side of the high altar"; and he then relates that he was translated after the manner of saints by the pious Ethelwold, "as is written in Vigilantius' *De Basilica Petri*, and is also contained in the lection which is read in the church of Winchester in the octave of the Translation of St. Birin." This we may assume to be the lection now before us, which the York Breviary has preserved; but the work of Vigilantius is lost.

We learn further from Rudborne that Ethelwold placed the body "most becomingly in a shrine (*in scrinio*) of silver and gold," and that he similarly translated the body of St. Swithun from a common sepulchre and "placed it honourably in a shrine of silver and gold most carefully wrought by King Edgar." This, he says, took place in the 110th year after St. Swithun's death; which would be the year 972, the ninth of Ethelwold's episcopate. It was on the fourth day of September, according to the testimony of the various calendars which commemorate it. Rudborne goes on to say that Ethelwold also translated the bodies of Saints Frithestan,

¹ *Hist. Maj. Winton.*, III. xii. (p. 223).

Brynstan, and Elphege, and St. Edburga the daughter of King Edward the Elder. Ethelwold was at this time rebuilding Cenwalh's church which the Danes had ruined in 871, and which Alfred had partially restored; and Rudborne tells us further that in 980 Ethelwold dedicated the church "in the presence of King Ethelred and St. Dunstan the archbishop, with eight other bishops assisting him."¹

Half-a-century later King Canute was a great benefactor of the cathedral. There is the well-known story of his forbidding the flowing tide to approach his feet, at Southampton, and then lecturing his courtiers on the folly of their flatteries; after which he set his crown on the head of the great crucifix in this church and thenceforth refused to wear it. He died in 1035; and in that year, as we learn from the Winchester annalist, he gave some costly gifts to the church, among which was "a feretory (*feretrum*) for the relics of St. Birin."² This was no doubt a portable shrine or bier on which the gold and silver shrine of Ethelwold's gift would be carried in processions.

It was probably soon after Canute's time that the prolix "Life of St. Birin" was compiled upon the basis of the Breviary Lection, the last words of which relate that his body was enshrined at Winchester "to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Life amplifies these last words:

"In which place many benefits are granted and many mighty works are done by the Lord to the praise of His priest, through His Son our Lord Who with Him liveth

¹ *Hist. Maj. Winton.*, III. xii. (p. 223).

² *Ann. Monast.* (Rolls, 36), II., p. 16.

and reigneth in the Holy Ghost unto the ages of the ages. Amen."

In the earlier half of the next century Henry of Huntingdon seems to imply that among the shrines at Winchester St. Berin's had the credit of the most famous miracles. He speaks of the visitor to the church beholding "the brilliant actions of our father Adelwold . . . and the praises of our holy father Swithun . . . and the great miracles of Birin the prelate of Dorkecestre."¹

Bishop Henry de Blois, the brother of King Stephen, held the see from 1129 to 1171, doing much for the enrichment of the church, and in particular he bestowed some additional honour upon St. Berin's relics. Rudborne tells us that this prelate collected the remains of the more important persons who had been buried in the church and placed them above ground in coffins of lead. These included the bones of Cynegils and Cenwalh and Bishop Wini, of Egbert and Ethelwulf, Canute and his Queen Emma, of Archbishop Stigand and his predecessor at Winchester, Bishop Alwin, and of William Rufus. Most of these had been buried in and about the choir, and some perhaps in the sacred crypt under the high altar which in Rudborne's time was known as "The Holy Hole."² The earlier Annals of Winchester say that in the year 1150 "the relics of SS. Birin, Swithun, Ædda, Birstan and Elfege were translated";³ and a similar passage appears in the Annals of Worcester (compiled from a Winchester Ms. in the thirteenth century), with the addition of St. Frithestan's

¹ *Henr. Hunt.* (Rolls, 74), Introd., p. xxvi.

² *Hist. Maj. Winton.*, II. vi. (*Angl. Sacr.*, I., p. 207).

³ *Ann. Monast.* (Rolls, 36), II., p. 54.

name.¹ Frithestan, Birstan and Elfege had been bishops of Winchester in succession shortly before Ethelwold's time. The Chronicle of St. Benet Holme near Norwich, attributed to John of Oxnead, also gives the entry, but only specifies "St. Birin and other saints at Winchester."² Nearly all that are thus named are the saints of whom we have already read in Rudborne as having been translated by St. Ethelwold. We must therefore infer that Bishop de Blois added in some way to the dignity of their shrines, perhaps enshrining the bones afresh in a style more suited to the Norman taste, at the same time that he brought up into the church the bodies of other illustrious persons who had not been enshrined.

They rested in the leaden chests until Bishop Fox, who held the see through the first quarter of the sixteenth century, removed them to the six ornamental chests of wood which still remain upon the side-screens of the choir. Of these the easternmost on the north side contains the bones of Cynegils together with those of Ethelwulf (here named *Adulphus*), the father of Alfred, the one described as *fundator* and the other as *benefactor*.

The name *S. Birinus episcopus* still appears, with those of *Kyngilsus rex* and *Kynwaldus rex* (Cenwalh) and other benefactors of the church, on the arcaded screen which crosses the east side of the Feretory. It is a beautiful piece of work of the thirteenth century, and the statues which filled its niches are said to have been of silver.

In the fifteenth century the great altar-screen with its

¹ *Ann. Monast.* (Rolls, 36), IV. 364. See p. xxxvii.

² *Chron. Joh. de Oxeneydes* (Rolls, 13), p. 54.

wealth of sculpture was erected in front of the Feretory, having a large central crucifix, with figures of Saints Mary and John, next to which were St. Swithun on the right and St. Berin on the left, with St. Peter and St. Paul above them, and St. Headda and St. Ethelwold below them, these six being accounted the patron saints of the church; ten other saints occupied the other principal niches, and a series of thirty small statues of persons connected with the history of Winchester were in the minor niches.

Shortly before the dissolution of the convent in 1539 Thomas Cromwell, as the king's vicar-general, carried off all the gold and jewels that the church possessed; and as his agent stated that the next day he "would sweep away all the rotten bones that be called relics," it is probable that the shrines of Saints Berin and Swithun were then rifled and their sacred remains scattered. But "there is reason to think that the statues were not pulled down by Cromwell's agents, for these men's piety was strengthened only by the sight of gold and silver and precious jewels, and the statues had nothing of that kind. They probably remained in their niches till the zeal of Bishop Horne, in Queen Elizabeth's time, prompted him to order the demolition of 'all superstitious images.' Then came down all the statues in the Cathedral, whether in the Chuntries or elsewhere, and especially those of the Screen."¹

The central part of the desolated screen was covered by a baldacchino of wood in the reign of Charles I., and afterwards some monstrous urns were set in twelve

¹ Dean Kitchin, *The Great Screen of Winchester Cathedral*, p. 11.

of the principal niches. These were taken away in 1820, and the mutilated work of the fifteenth century was again left bare. Its restoration was undertaken in 1885 as a memorial to Archdeacon Jacob, and has recently been completed by the erection of the Crucifix in 1899. The figures of the eighteen principal saints occupy the same places as before ; but as no complete list of the smaller statues existed the number has been filled up by the introduction of a few representative persons of later times, down to John Keble. The one living person who, with a special fitness, was included in the series was Queen Victoria, and the large statue of St. Edward the Confessor was her Majesty's gift. The statue of the late Queen is happily placed near that of Cynegils, with Alfred the Great between, as if to represent the entire line of the Christian sovereigns who had ruled in Winchester.

The large figure of St. Berin is given from the "Jacob Memorial Fund" ; and, like the opposite figure of St. Swithun, is sculptured by Mr. Nicholls. The work fully merits the commendation which has been bestowed upon it ; but, for the sake of consistency with what has been said in these pages of the saint's nationality, it is impossible to omit an expression of regret that the sturdy and heroic missionary from Genoa has been treated as "an Italian monk," with "a southern face," and "rather smaller in frame and stature than the English St. Swithun."¹ The figure of St. Headda carries an ornamental reliquary in the right hand, to represent the translation of St. Berin's bones from Dorchester.

Winchester Cathedral contains one other feature of

¹ Dean Kitchen, p. 18.

interest which has been frequently connected with St. Berin's name. This is the large font of dark marble erected in the twelfth century. Its sculptures have been supposed to represent scenes in the saint's life, as the voyage to England, the Baptism of Cynegils, and the dying king pledging his son Cenwalh in St. Berin's presence to carry out the building of the church. Gough, in the *Vetusta Monumenta*,¹ was the first to assign this meaning to the scenes, and he has been followed by many writers. But there is much in the sculptures which cannot be fitted in with such an interpretation ; and it has been proved conclusively, by a comparison with similar fonts in other places, that the history represented is that of St. Nicholas of Myra, whose legends found great favour with the Normans.²

¹ Vol. II. (1786), Notes on Plates xxxix., xl.

² Milner's *Hist. of Winchester*, II., p. 77 ; *Journal of Brit. Arch. Assoc.*, L., Pt. I. (1894).

CHAPTER XI

THE CONTROVERSY OF THE RELICS

"Nam cum vita prior virtute refulserit omni,
Excellente tamen premitur splendore sequentis.
Sancta tot ex meritis emanat opinio, cujus
Suavis odor totam diffusus inebriat urbem."

Alexander Essebiensis, 210-213.

THE Augustinian Abbey of Dorchester was founded at a period when the relics of an eminent saint were, from more than one point of view, the most valued possession that a great church could own. In the twelfth century such a treasure added much to the sanctity of the place, and also brought large additions to its revenue. There is a quaint realism in the words of Rudborne when, after recording St. Berin's death, he adds that "his body, more precious than gold and the topaz, was at first honourably buried in the church of Dorchester."¹ And it is not to be wondered at, that as years passed on, the abbot and canons of Dorchester felt the need of one who should do for them what St. Swithun was doing for Winchester, and St. Wolfstan for Worcester, and St. Thomas for Canterbury, and many another saint for his own church elsewhere. It can hardly be doubted that mixed motives made them determine to claim the

¹ *Hist. Maj. Winton.*, II. ii. (*Angl. Sacr.*, p. 190). Compare Job xxviii. 17-19.

possession of St. Berin. We may hope that there was some honest ignorance of the facts, while we must fear that it was an unworthy attempt to add dignity to their abbey with little regard for truth, and perhaps not without a desire for the sordid gains of this world.

We do not find that any claim of this kind was actually put forward for upwards of eighty years after the foundation of the abbey. But it is remarkable that royal patronage was being largely bestowed upon it. The Empress Matilda had granted to it the church of Bensington with its endowments, and the Kings Henry II., Richard and John had each in turn confirmed the gift;¹ whence we infer that the abbey was beginning to take the position which was afterwards accorded to it as the church most in favour with the neighbouring royal castle of Wallingford. Yet it was four miles distant from the town, and across the river; to reach it by bridge was a journey over five miles of marshes; and it was in another county and another diocese; while the castle had at its gates the Benedictine Priory of the Holy Trinity, a cell of St. Alban's, and for all practical purposes the great Berkshire Abbey of Abingdon was almost as near as Dorchester. There must have been some special reason for the favour shown to this church; and if it was already supposed to contain St. Berin's body, the facts may be readily understood.

The account of St. Berin contained in the collections of Capgrave and of Surius relates the proceedings that were taken under Pope Honorius III. and Archbishop Stephen Langton to decide the question whether the true relics of the saint were at Dorchester or at Win-

¹ See above, ch. IV., p. 76.

chester. A brief summary, which will serve as an introduction to the story, appears in the English version of Capgrave's *Newe Legende of Englande* (fol. xi):

"Bede *de gestys Anglorum* wrytyth that afterso that Byryne had convertyd moche people and buylded many Churches he dyed and was buryed in Dorchester and that he was after translatyd to Wynchestre by Hedda the busshope and thereupon was great sute bytwixte Wynchestre and Dorchestre for his Body and the Pope wrote downe a Bulle to enquire the trouthe. And it apperyth not in the Legende what ende it toke, but it semyth to be the more probable oppynyon that he lyeth at Dorchester for it was provyd that myracles had be doon in his name at Dorchester."

The account in the original *Nova Legenda*¹ (and also in Surius,² where the differences are scarcely more than verbal), after quoting the statement of Bede, continues as follows:

"The canons of Dorchester, differing herein from Bede, wrote to Pope Honorius; whereupon he sent a letter to England in these terms: Honorius the bishop, servant of the servants of God, to our venerable brother Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, cardinal of the holy Roman church, and to our beloved brethren the archdeacon and the official of Canterbury, health and apostolic benediction. On the part of our beloved sons the abbot and convent of Dorchester humble supplication has been made to us regarding the body of Saint Birin, who was of old sent by pope Honorius, our predecessor of happy remembrance, into England, and converted from idolatry and baptised the king of famous memory together with his people, and after happily fulfilling the office of

¹ Capgrave, *Nov. Leg. Angl.* (ed. 1516), ff. xxxviii. b.—xxxix. b. *De Probatis Sanctorum Historiis* (ed. 1575), pp. 688, 9.

his legation with the glory of many virtues died and remained buried in his own monastery in a lowly place : and since his name is contained in the catalogue of the saints, they ask that we would cause him to be laid in a more fitting place. We therefore, possessing full confidence in your discretion, do enjoin to your discretion by our apostolic writing that if ye shall find the matter so to be ye may grant licence by our authority to the aforesaid abbot and convent that they translate the body of this saint to a place more worthy. Given at the Lateran the seventh day before the Ides of March in the eighth year of our Pontificate.

“Then archbishop Stephen entrusted his authority to the aforesaid archdeacon and official, and a large company was assembled, in the year of our Lord 1224. And among many witnesses a certain canon stated on oath how he had often heard canon William say that some one had appeared to him many times in vision bidding him seek a certain tomb in the church of Dorchester before the altar of Holy Cross where he would find the body of saint Birin ; and that having obtained the abbot's leave they sought the tomb and opened it in the presence of the abbot and canons, and found the body of a bishop entire, with a double stole and a red fillet of silken cloth, and with a cross of metal and a chalice laid upon his breast : and on the Sabbath after that discovery one who had been blind seven years came to the body and received his sight : and a young man deaf and dumb from his birth obtained hearing and speech, for he said that he had been bidden to go to Dorchester so that he might receive healing ; and when he answered that he did not know the place, the man who appeared to him said that he would lead him, so he awoke and that man led him there ; and when he was healed at blessed Birin's tomb, and spoke in English, a certain canon said to him in sport, He who taught thee to speak was not a courtier for otherwise he would have been able

to teach thee a different language ; and within three days he began to speak French as perfectly as English : besides which, the saint resuscitated a certain dead man, cleansed a leper, and moreover restored two dead men to life ; and a man dumb from his birth received speech. After these things and many others had been set forth by the abbot and convent, the question was asked whether any writing was found with the body, and the abbot replied that there was none. Whereupon with consent of all the tomb was opened, and the bones were found lying in natural order, but the flesh was reduced to ashes. His ring was found also, and a leaden cross upon his breast, a small chalice, portions of his vestments, and two stoles but not entire. There was found also a burse of silk upon his breast, a kind of wallet, woven on one side with gold ; for all declared that in it had been the pall with the Body of Christ, for which, as has been related, he walked with dry feet upon the sea. And a certain abbot exclaimed, Sure I am that this is the body of Saint Birin, for this night I heard a voice as of some great person saying in the Latin tongue, Doubt not about the finding of the body of blessed Birin for ye shall find the body whole but reduced to ashes. Then he was asked what he would reply to this which is written in the book of Bede, that blessed Birin was buried in the church of Dorcestre and thence translated after many years to the church of Wenta. The abbot admitted that it was so written ; but he said that in chronicles are written not only things that are seen but also things that are heard. And he admitted that the body of a certain bishop buried in an angle behind the door was translated to the church of Winton, while some bones were left in that church ; but it was incredible that such a bishop and legate should be buried in so mean a place. He declared also that after the first finding of blessed Birin a certain holy hermit at Haliwelle outside Oxford, Matthew by name, heard a voice saying to him, ‘ Birin

in the pavement, Bertin behind the door' (which Bertin was the tenth bishop after Birin): and moreover that at Dorcestre many miracles happen and at Winton none. The supreme pontiff being certified of these matters wrote thus:

"Honorius the bishop, etc., to our venerable brother Stephen archbishop of Canterbury, cardinal of the holy Roman church, and our beloved son master Otho our subdeacon, health and apostolic benediction. Our beloved sons the abbot and convent of Dorcestre having sometime informed us that the body of blessed Birin the bishop rests in their church in a lowly place, and having entreated that we would cause it to be laid in a place more fitted for it, we sent letters to thee, brother archbishop, and to our beloved sons the archdeacon and official of Canterbury, requiring that if ye should find the matter so to be ye would grant to the said abbot and convent licence on our authority to translate the body to a more fitting place. Further, we have lately received letters from thee and the archdeacon and official, relating that the archdeacon himself, deputed by thee and the said official, went in person to the place, summoning men whose life and good repute were known, and enquired into the truth of this matter with all possible diligence. Now although by the things which he discovered regarding the finding of the tomb where the saint's body is said to rest and regarding miracles with which the divine mercy has wonderfully honoured that place in modern times at the invocation of the saint's glorious name, and also by indications found in the tomb when he caused it to be opened, it has seemed probable to us that this saint's body rests in that place, yet since in Bede's book, *Of the Acts of the English*, it is read that the saint's body was sometime translated to the church of Winton, you feared to proceed in the business against the words of so great a man lest ye should be proved somewhat presumptuous, and ye have remitted

the business to the apostolic see by faithfully transmitting to us under your seals the process of the said archdeacon. Although therefore from that process it appears evident that this place shines with many great and famous miracles through the glorious merits of the saint, and it may well be believed that this most glorious saint ennobles by his bodily presence the place which the divine power has honoured with so many miracles at the invocation of his name, yet, lest in such a business any contingency may be overlooked, we have thought fit to remit the process to you under our Bull, giving command to your discretion by our apostolic letters that ye go in person to the church of Winton and enquire carefully if the Lord have magnified His saint by any miracles done in that church; and if ye shall ascertain that miracles, equal to or greater than those contained in the said process, are done at the invocation of the saint's name in that church of Winton, then ye desist from this business, intimating to us faithfully by your letters what ye shall find. Moreover since it is probable, and indeed may not be doubted, that Bede in his History of the English, related many things from hearsay; and it may even be that since the bodies of the two holy pontiffs Birin and Bertin were buried in the said church of Dorcestre, as from the said process we gather, what Bede wrote of Bertin may have been received of Berin from a corruption of the name by carelessness of scribes; ye may pronounce that the glorious saint's body rests in the church of Dorcestre which is known to be honoured with so glorious miracles through his merits; and ye may grant to the abbot and convent licence by our authority to translate the body to a place more fitting. Given at Reati on the nones of August in the tenth year of our pontificate.

"I have nowhere been able to find the execution of this Bull; but I know, as I learnt in that place, that the glorious body of St. Birin was translated from the place

where it was anciently buried in the aforesaid church, and that with great honour, as is plain from eye-witnesses."

The detailed stories of the miracles done at the saint's tomb at Dorchester do not appear elsewhere. The beginning of them at least is not without interest. A blind man received sight, and a deaf and dumb man received hearing and speech, and the second of these was bidden in a vision to go to Dorchester, but needed a guide to lead him there. All this reads like a varied form of the story which is told in the earlier Lives, as well as in this one, of the blind and deaf woman. The other form of it attributed this power to the saint in his life, and it is here attributed to him again after death. When we are told that this dumb man spoke first in English, and was joked by a canon for having learnt his language from one who was not a courtier, and was then enabled to speak French in three days, it is obvious that the story cannot have taken this form until some time after the Norman Conquest. The point of it seems to be that the canon was throwing doubt upon the identity of the body on the ground that St. Berin was connected with the court of Cynegils and therefore must have spoken French like any other courtier; but the saint, to prove his identity, completed his work by giving the man power to speak that language.

We have to notice also the suggestion made by the abbot and canons, and half accepted by the pope, that the bishop whose body had been translated to Winchester, as told by Bede, was not St. Berin but Bertin who was his tenth successor. It appears, however, from Florence of Worcester's Catalogue, that St. Berin's tenth successor was Dudda, who held the see for a short time

from 781 and was succeeded by Kinbert, whose episcopate closed in 802,¹ nearly seventy years after Bede's death. But Bertin is supposed to be Birnstan² or Beornstan, who was twenty-second in succession from St. Berin and lived until 934. Neither Kinbert nor Birnstan, therefore, can be the bishop whose translation was recorded by Bede. Nor is there any reason to suppose that Kinbert was buried at Dorchester; while of Birnstan the Saxon Chronicle expressly states that he "died at Winchester on the feast of All-hallows," and we have already met with him among those whom Ethelwold enshrined. We may suspect that there is some confusion with the name of St. Bertin, abbot of St. Omer in Artois, who died in 709 and is commemorated in several calendars, including the Winchester Calendar of 867,³ on September 5, the day following that of St. Berin's translation.

Our knowledge of the annals of Dorchester is too scanty to allow us to name with certainty the abbot under whom these proceedings were taken. One Eustace was abbot when King John, in 1205, gave the Charter confirming to the convent the grant of the church and tithes of Bensington.⁴ We may presume that Eustace still held the dignity in 1224; but we know nothing more of him. There is some evidence of the appointment of an abbot Richard in 1235,⁵ and if the date is correct we must infer that he was probably the abbot whom Bishop Grossteste deposed at a visitation which he

¹ See Bp. Stubbs, *Reg. Sac. Angl.*

² Bp. Stubbs in *Dict. Christian Biogr.*, Art. *St. Birinus*.

³ Bodl. Ms. Digby 63.

⁴ Above, p. 76.

⁵ Addington's *Dorchester*, p. 89, wrongly cites the date as 1225, from Cole's Ms., Vol. XXVII., f. 82 b.

held in 1236,¹ and that he held the office only one year. But the question arises whether the date of Richard's election may not have been 1236 (instead of 1235); and if so, the deposed abbot would probably be the same that set up the false claim for the relics twelve years before.

No further proceedings in this controversy are recorded.² The saint's shrine remained undisturbed at Winchester, where, however, it was always second in importance to that of St. Swithun. At Dorchester the evidences that remain must lead us to infer that nearly half-a-century passed before the abbot and canons set up their shrine which bore St. Berin's name but contained the bones of another.

¹ Ann. de Dunstaplia, in *Ann. Monast.*, III., p. 143. In 1236 also the bishop sent a letter to King Henry III. by the abbot of Dorchester, but his name is not given: *Rob. Grosseteste Epp.* (Rolls Ser., 25), p. 114.

² Cressy, *Church History*, XVI. iv., p. 351.

CHAPTER XII

DORCHESTER ABBEY AND ITS SHRINE

“ Non latet urbs in monte sedens, et nemo lucernam
Ponere sub modio sed tollere debet in altum
In candelabro, ne lumen inutile spargens
Ardeat, immo domum Domini radiosa serenet.
Famaque Birini velud urbs in monte, lucerna
In candelabro, longe lateque coruscat.”

Alexander Essebiensis, 214-219.

THE main fabric of the present abbey-church of Dorchester is the work of four distinct periods. The lower portions of the older walls in its western half, as far as what were once the transepts, are probably the remains of the cathedral erected by Bishop Eadnoth, the third of that name, who also built the minster of Stow in Lindsey, and who died in 1050. In the upper portions of the nave-wall and of the central crossing, and in some features which are preserved at the eastern angles of the choir, we see the work of the Norman builders of the latter part of the twelfth century, erected some forty years after the abbey of Augustinian canons was founded here in 1140 by Alexander, the second bishop of Lincoln. Thirdly, the most beautiful and striking features of the church—the choir with its aisles—are Decorated work, dating from the latter part of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the fourteenth ;

and a rude arch on either side, cut through the Norman wall, was probably made at this time with a view to remodelling the old transeptal crossing in accordance with the splendid choir; thus showing us the largeness of the designer's plan, which never attained completion. Finally, towards the close of the fourteenth century, the magnificent presbytery was thrown out eastward from the choir, and the south aisle was added to the nave to serve as a parish church for the townsfolk. A tower of the seventeenth century completes the church.

It is the third of these several stages of the fabric that has special interest in connection with St. Berin. The choir has a very narrow north aisle of the period of Edward I., and a very wide south aisle built a few years later, but forming part of the same design. The eastern end of this south aisle is of remarkable plan, being divided into two portions, each with a lofty east window, and furnished with vaulting-shafts and the springs of a beautifully-moulded vault; though this last was never erected until the recent renovations supplied it. It has been thought that the inner of these two chapels in the south aisle was designed for the shrine of the saint,¹ which would thus stand between the high altar and the southernmost altar, in a position corresponding with that which the shrine of St. Frideswide occupied on the north side in her church (now the cathedral) at Oxford. Thus the shrine was the great object to which the entire plan of the church was made subservient. We may suppose that if it had been possible the purpose

¹ Report of a paper by Mr. J. Oldrid Scott, in *Oxford Times*, June 4, 1886. Other authorities place it behind the high altar (*ibid.* June 2, 1882), but the piscina and sedilia are too near the east wall to admit of this.

would have been preferably served by the extension of a retro-choir eastward, as in so many of our larger churches—the most conspicuous example being that which contains the shrine of St. Edward the Confessor at Westminster. Thus also at Winchester the shrine of St. Swithun stood in the Feretory behind the high altar. But the exigencies of this position on the bank of the Thame admitted of no such extension larger than that which the builders of the next period carried out.

Of this shrine of St. Berin we have an ample contemporary account in the *Polychronicon* of Higden in the fourteenth century. His account is thus rendered by Trevisa :

“Atte the last, by Hedda bisshop of Wynchestre, Birinus was translated to Wynchestre, into the chirche of Seynt Peter and Poul. But the chanouns of Dorchestre seyth nay, and seyth that it was another body than saint Birinus his body that was so translated ; therefore a beere of a wonder-werk is yit i-seen at Dorchestre, above the place of his frste grave.”¹

Another contemporary writer, whose words have been inserted into some copies of Higden, is still more explicit, saying that “a marble bier (*feretrum marmoreum*) of astonishing sculpture was built about the year of grace 1320 over Birinus’ body at Dorchester.”²

This *feretrum*, or bier, may possibly have formed the actual shrine in which the bones of the saint were deposited ; but more probably it was constructed with open sides to contain an inner shrine of metal-work. Thus a “fereter of gold and silver” was provided by

¹ *Polychron. Ran. Higden* (Rolls Ser.), VI., p. 5.

² *Ibid.* p. 2. See also Addington’s *Dorchester*, p. 137.

Bishop Hugh of Durham for the bones of Venerable Bede ;¹ and Rudborne relates that Bishop Ethelwold deposited those of St. Swithun in "a shrine (*scrinium*) of silver and gold wrought with the greatest care by King Edgar."² Erasmus also, in his *Colloquies*,³ describes the "golden casket" (*aurea theca*) containing the relics of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Fabyan, who printed his *New Chronicles of England and France* in London in 1516, repeats Higden's description of the shrine of St. Berin :

"The chanons of Dorchestre sayen that the sayd bodye of holye Beryne was not taken thens, but a nother in the stede of hym, and yet in token therof a beer of wonder warke standith at this day over the grave where the holy man was firste byryed."⁴

A few years ago the restorers of Dorchester church removed the masonry which blocked a doorway between the north transept and the site of the cloisters, and discovered within it the stones of an elaborate canopy corresponding in character with the architecture of the south aisle. They appeared to have been carefully built in for the sake of preservation.⁵ The canopy which they form measures seven feet six inches in length and two feet in breadth, divided into traceried compartments

¹ *Rites of Durham* (Surtees Soc.), p. 38. It may be noted that here the word *fereter* is used in its proper sense, for that in which the relics are borne (as *bier*); the *feretrum* at Dorchester described by Higden is a stone monument; the *feretory* at Winchester is the place where such a monument stood.

² *Hist. Winton*, III. xii. (in *Angl. Sacr.*, p. 223).

³ *Peregrinatio Religionis Ergo*, p. 404 (ed. Elzev., 1636).

⁴ Fabyan, *Pars V.*, cap. cxxxiii.

⁵ Rev. W. C. Macfarlane, in Parker's *Dorchester*, p. 29.

with well-cut human heads as bosses at the intersections; and the tracery is coloured blue, red and yellow, the rest of the stone being left without colour. As the material is a finely-grained freestone, the structure might be described as "marmoreum," as in the passage quoted above. It is duly preserved in the church; and near it, among a varied collection of fragments, are some moulded and foliated pieces of blue Purbeck marble which may well have belonged to the substructure of the same erection. All this agrees entirely with what we have been told of the "feretrum."

A fine recumbent effigy of a bishop, of the early part of the fourteenth century, has been placed beside the choir-screen and in front of the chapel where the shrine is believed to have stood. It has been commonly supposed, on the authority of Leland, to commemorate Æschwine or Escwy, who was bishop of Dorchester from 979 to 1002. But there is a strong probability that St. Berin himself is the prelate who is thus represented. The date of the effigy corresponds with that of the chapel and the shrine; and when the canons were removing to this new shrine the body which they declared to be St. Berin's, they may well have set his effigy near it as if to mark the original grave. There is a parallel instance in Wimborne Minster, where a brass of the middle of the fifteenth century represents King Ethelred,¹ the eldest brother of Alfred, who was slain by the Danes in 872, and being buried at Wimborne was honoured there as a martyr. Moreover, this effigy at Dorchester appears to be designed for something more

¹ Haines, *Monumental Brasses*, p. lxxiv.

than a sepulchral monument. The head lies upon a cushion, in the left side of which is a metal socket for a candle, and the feet rest upon an embattled pedestal with its base left bare, and evidently intended to be set against some other erection on the east of it, probably against the shrine itself. The position of the left arm shows that the hand, which is broken off, must have held a crosier; but as none appears in the sculpture, a metal one must have been inserted.

The effigy was discovered beneath the floor of the north aisle,¹ and therefore near the spot where the canopy of the shrine was hidden. Like the canopy, also, the effigy had been laid there with some care; for it is so well preserved that although the face is worn and the hands are broken off, yet the red chasuble and blue dalmatic retain much of their original colouring. If the effigy was connected with the shrine, there was an obvious reason for concealing it, since it would be specially liable to mutilation or destruction as a monument of superstition; while the only other episcopal memorial in the church—a slab incised with the figure of Abbot Roger who was suffragan-bishop in the neighbouring diocese of Salisbury,²—as well as similar monuments of other abbots, could be left in their places with comparative safety. We have every reason to conclude that the effigy called Æschwine's was intended for St. Berin, and was erected as an adjunct to the shrine.³

Another feature in the fabric of the church, claiming notice in connection with this subject, is the great south

¹ Gough's *Camden's Britannia* (1789), Vol. I., p. 307.

² Addington's *Dorchester*, pp. 14, 91.

³ See Appendix, Note III.

window in the extended presbytery erected late in the fourteenth century. Upon the transom which crosses the five lights of the window is a series of ten small sculptured figures grouped in the jambs and against each of the four mullions. They form a procession, in which the first figure carries a holy-water vessel and the asperges; a bishop is following in the latter part, and the figures on either side of the central light appear to have the ends of staves resting horizontally upon their shoulders. There seems little doubt that originally there was a representation of a shrine borne by these figures and extending across the glass between them, so as to form the central object in the design. The sculptures upon the stonework of the north window opposite form a Tree of Jesse, illustrating the Old Testament; those in the east window connect themselves with the Gospel-history, representing scenes in the Passion and the Resurrection and the Last Judgment; and these in the south window, with a view to illustrating the times of the Christian Church, may well represent the enshrinement of St. Berin, or a procession of his relics.¹

The Norman builders of the twelfth century had already depicted the story of St. Berin in some beautiful glass, of which considerable portions remain. Some of these have been placed in four triangular lights in the heads of the sedilia and piscina. The largest and most conspicuous of them is the panel over the central sedile, having the name BERINUS at the base, and representing his consecration by Asterius of Milan. The archbishop

¹ A very similar Procession of a Shrine (misnamed "Passage of the Host") is figured in Knight's *Old England*, I., p. 357, No. 1334 from Ms. Cotton. Nero, D. I.

holds his cross-staff in his left hand and raises his right in benediction; the bishop who is being consecrated holds his crosier in his left, resting it against his shoulder, and with his right he seems to be grasping the cross which the consecrator holds in his left; while a third figure, with hands raised in prayer, stands beside them. Over the upper sedile is a seated figure, wearing a mitre, with the pall and cross-staff of an archbishop. It can scarcely be Asterius of Milan, as it differs entirely from the figure in the adjacent group, the face being much fuller, and the beard larger, whereas Asterius is represented with a thin and ascetic face. Probably, therefore, it may be intended for Honorius of Canterbury, or possibly for St. Augustine. Over the lower sedile, on the other side of the central group, is a similar mitred figure, wearing the pall of an archbishop but holding the crosier of a bishop. This can hardly be other than St. Berin himself, and it will be more fully noticed in the next chapter. In the fourth panel, over the adjoining piscina, is a representation of the eucharistic oblation, in which the celebrant, apparently vested as a bishop, holds the missal in his left hand, and with his right takes the wafer from a paten held by the deacon, while the sub-deacon, holding two cruets, stands on the other side. If this belonged originally to the series, we may take it to be St. Berin (whose mitre would be laid aside at this point of the service), either celebrating the Mass at Dorchester, or else that which he is said to have performed before leaving the coast of France. It appears that the voyage also was represented in glass which is now lost; for Hearne, in his notes on William of Newbridge in 1719, mentions "what now remains of the

historical painting in Dorchester windows, relating to Birinus' voyage thither and his converting the heathen."¹ Of the latter subject a fine panel survives in the great east window of the choir. It represents the saint in episcopal vestments, with his pastoral staff resting on his left arm and his right hand raised in exhortation, while four or five men sit before him with hands extended in acceptance of his preaching, and in the front is seated King Cynegils in royal robes with crown and sceptre. The next panel of the window shows a similar figure of a bishop, presumably St. Berin, standing alone. The lost panel, depicting the saint's voyage, is described by Warton in a letter to Gough in 1785, as showing "the deck of a ship, with a head crowned; Birinus sailing to England."² This glass was then in the north windows of the nave.³

Of the six bells of the abbey two at least belong to the same scheme that devised St. Berin's shrine. The tenor is dedicated to the saint,⁴ with an inscription invoking his protection for the worshippers and recording the name of the bell-founder:⁵

"Protege Birine quos convoco tu sine fine. Raf Rastwold."

The second calls upon St. Peter and St. Paul, praying the one to open to his people and the other to grant them mercy:

"Petre tuis aperi. Da Paule tuis misereri."

¹ *Guil. Neubrigensis Hist.*, III. 773.

² *Vetusta Monumenta*, Vol. II., Notes on Plates xxxix., xl.,

p. 3.

³ See Appendix, Note IV.

⁴ See ch. IX., p. 150.

⁵ See further in Appendix, Note V,

An interesting note has been preserved, recording a transaction which took place at the period when the Norman builders renovated the abbey church. In 1174 the monks of Dorchester sold their copies of Bede's Homilies and St. Austin's Psalter to Walter, the prior of St. Swithun's at Winchester; and in exchange for the two volumes they received "twelve measures of barley and a pall on which was embroidered in silver the history of St. Birin converting King Cynegils to the faith and St. Oswald receiving him from the font."¹

¹ *Registr. Priorat. S. Swithin., Winton.*, quoted in Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774), Vol. I., Dissert. II.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WEST SAXON BISHOPRIC

“O Christi regnum dominans, dominacio regnans ;
Lex pia, legitima pietas ; tutela fidelis,
Tuta fides ; clemens dulcor, clemencia dulcis !”

Alexander Essebiensis, 319-321.

ST. BERIN'S mission was direct from Rome, and entirely independent of those churches which had already been planted in England. In other cases, as in that of St. Ninian, for example, missionary bishops were sent out without reference to any existing provincial system ; but it is the more remarkable in Berin's case, because a complete ecclesiastical organisation of the country had been so recently planned by Gregory. He had assigned the primacy to Augustine (intending, however, that the primatial see should eventually be fixed at London), and had authorised him to appoint twelve diocesan bishops, as well as one for York who should become a metropolitan also with twelve more bishops under him.¹ Yet less than forty years after this elaborate scheme had been formulated for Augustine's guidance, we find Pope Honorius sending Berin without attempting to consult Honorius of Canterbury upon the subject. This seems to admit of only one explanation. It has

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, I. 29.

been suggested that it was intended as "a tacit rebuke" to the Canterbury mission, showing that those in authority at Rome felt it to be a comparative failure and recognised that the efforts which had been wasted in controversy with the British bishops about the claim of precedence and questions of ecclesiastical usage might have been more worthily employed.¹ The suggestion is the more probable when we find in the sequel that there was a sympathy between the West Saxon and the British churches which had been wanting in the other case. Possibly also the choice of one who appears to have been of Teutonic race for this second mission may be taken to point in the same direction, as indicating a hope that he might succeed where the achievements of Latins had not been conspicuous.

This independence of the West Saxon mission continued in the time of the bishops who followed. Their appointment appears as the act of the king alone, without reference to any ecclesiastical authority. Cenwalh had succeeded his father Cynegils seven years and had been a Christian four years when it fell to him to choose a successor to St. Berin. The account of the transaction may be given most conveniently in the words of Bede :

"A certain bishop named Agilberct came into the province from Ireland, being a Gaul by birth, but having lived a long time in Ireland for the purpose of reading the Scriptures ; and he joined himself to the king, taking on himself the ministry of preaching. The king, seeing his learning and industry, asked him to accept the episcopal see there and remain as bishop of his people ; and he assented to the request, and for many years presided over the nation with sacerdotal authority. At

¹ W. H. Jones, *Dioc. Hist. Salisbury*, p. 24.

length the king, who knew only the language of the Saxons, became tired of his barbarous speech, and introduced into the province another bishop, named Wini, who spoke his own language, and who also had been ordained in Gaul.”¹

Wini in his turn “was expelled by the same king from his episcopate,” and Cenwalh “sent emissaries into Gaul to Agilberct,” who in the meantime had become bishop of Paris, “entreating him with humble apologies to return to the episcopate of his nation.” The result was that Agilberct, excusing himself, recommended his nephew, a presbyter named Leutherius, or Hlothere. Then, in the year 670 according to the Chronicle, we have the first allusion to Canterbury in connection with the West Saxon see; but it is only a request for the consecration of Hlothere, who has been chosen with the same independence as his predecessors.

“The people and the king received him honourably, and asked Theodore, who was at that time archbishop of the church of Canterbury, that he might be consecrated bishop for them; and he was then consecrated in that city.”²

Three years later, at the Synod of Hertford, at which Hlothere and nearly all the bishops of England were present, the metropolitan authority of the see of Canterbury was recognised;³ and finally, at the Synod of Cloveshoo in 805, the diocese of Winchester was formally incorporated into the province, and Wigthegn its bishop signed a solemn profession of obedience to Archbishop Wulfred.⁴

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, III. 7.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* IV. 5.

⁴ Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, etc., III., 569.

The figure of St. Berin wearing a metropolitan's pall, in glass of the twelfth century in Dorchester Abbey, is of interest in connection with this subject of the independence of his mission. There are instances of the pall being granted to a bishop in token of his not being subject to any metropolitan jurisdiction; as, for example, when Pope Paschal II. bestowed the privilege upon the bishops of Bamberg in 1106; but there is no mention of Pope Honorius granting it to St. Berin as he did to St. Paulinus of York. We can only suppose that the canons of Dorchester used the recognised symbol to represent the fact that the founder of their church received an independent commission from the Roman see.

Rudborne, the Winchester historian of the fifteenth century, asks the question, "whether the see of the church of Winchester is not a primatial see, since one who first converts a province or kingdom to the Christian faith is called a primate?" and he implies that St. Berin has even higher claim to that dignity than either Augustine or Paulinus, for he adds:

"Augustine, the first apostle of the English, being sent to England immediately by blessed Gregory, is deservedly called primate of all England, since he baptised some portion of that nation; . . . and Paulinus, who converted the people of York to the faith, was sent thither, not indeed immediately by the pope, but mediately by the pope's legate, yet he and his successors in the see of York possess the title and dignity of primate: . . . why then does not the bishop of Winchester enjoy the same privilege? for blessed Birin, the first bishop of the Gewyse, was sent not by any legate of the pope, but immediately by the blessed Pope Honorius, to set the seal of the faith upon that very large residue of England

which Augustine had left unconverted ; therefore it seems strange that the bishops of Winchester do not boast of the title and dignity of primate, together with the privilege, like the other primates of the English.”¹

It is at least curious also, and possibly significant, that one writer of a little later date than Rudborne gave St. Berin the title of archbishop. John Bale, sometime a monk of Norwich and raised under Edward VI. to the bishopric of Ossory, a reforming controversialist of some vehemence, quaintly says :

“Benedictine monks first came into England with Augustine, archbishop of Canterbury, in 596, and Canons Regular with Birin, archbishop of Dorchester, in 636 ; these were the two sects of the great antichrist, the two horns of the beast.”²

This designation of archbishop may possibly be a mere slip of the pen ; or, on the other hand, it may be intended to describe St. Berin’s true historical position as the equal and not the suffragan of Augustine’s successors.

It is possible that some vague recollection of this independence of St. Berin’s mission may have had its influence in the establishment of the transitory Mercian archbishopric of Lichfield in Offa’s days ; and again, on the West Saxon side, when Bishop Henry of Blois in Stephen’s reign attempted to gain metropolitan rank for his see of Winchester. We may presume that these facts in the past history of the province of Canterbury will be kept in view in that development of our provincial system which the needs of the English Church must inevitably demand in the near future.

¹ Rudborne, in *Angl. Sacr.*, pp. 190, 191.

² Bale, *Script. Illustr. Maj. Brit. Catal.* (Basle, 1557), Cent. I. lxxxii., f. 83. Compare also Cent. XIII. iv., fol. 117.

It has been noted already that the causes which led to the removal of the bishopric from Dorchester to Winchester had begun to work in St. Berin's lifetime, and that in the time of the bishops who succeeded him the original dignity of Dorchester necessarily passed away. When King Cenwalh became weary of the barbarous speech of Agilberct, as Bede relates, he brought in another bishop named Wini;

"and dividing the province into two dioceses, he gave to him an episcopal see in the city of Wenta, which the Saxons call Wintan-cester; whereupon Agilberct was grievously offended that the king did this without consulting him, and he returned into Gaul."¹

The king evidently intended that Agilberct should retain the northern portion of the realm as his diocese, and should still preside over it at Dorchester; but Agilberct resigned, and thus Wini became bishop of the undivided diocese until he removed from it to London. Wini is called by Florence of Worcester "prelate of the city of Wenta," and the same authority says that the next bishop, Hlothere, was consecrated in the city of Wenta in 670. Yet Hlothere, the second bishop who died while occupying the see, was buried at Dorchester as St. Berin had been; and Headda, who succeeded him in 676, is called by Matthew Paris the first bishop of Winchester. Malmesbury² speaks of the see being "confirmed" at Winchester in Headda's day; and the expression implies that practically it had passed thither already while it was still nominally at Dorchester. There is no doubt that from this time forward Winchester became fully recognised as the seat of the bishopric.³

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, III. 7.

² *Gest. Pont.*, II., § 75.

³ Compare Hill's *English Dioceses*, pp. 50-52.

Of Wini, the first prelate who sat at Winchester, Bede tells a strange story. Like Agilberct before him, "Wini also was expelled from his bishopric" by King Cenwalh; though in this case no reason is stated. Wini then "took refuge with Wulfhere, king of the Mercians, and from him bought with a price the see of the city of London, and remained bishop thereof until his life's end."¹

But if Wini's episcopate at Winchester is darkened at its close by a transaction which, as far as we can judge, appears to be disgraceful, it is none the less memorable for an event of great significance in the history of the churches of Britain. Ceadda or Chad, the abbot of Lastingham, had been chosen by King Oswy for the see of York, and came to Canterbury for consecration; but Archbishop Deusdedit was dead and no successor had yet been appointed; whereupon Chad proceeded into Wessex, and there, doubtless at Winchester, he was consecrated bishop by Wini, with the assistance of "two bishops of the British race."² It was "the first step towards effecting a union of the Welsh and English churches."³ This was probably in 665.⁴ The two bishops were no doubt from the south-western district into which Cenwalh had penetrated some seven years before when he gained his great victory over the Welsh "at Peonna." It is interesting to find that by this time the relations between the churches of the conqueror and the conquered were such as to admit of this remarkable incident of intercommunion. It is the more interesting by contrast with the failure of Augustine's efforts when he attempted to negotiate with the British bishops. But we have seen

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, III. 7.

² *Ibid.* III. 28.

³ Bright, *Early Engl. Ch.*, p. 245.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 246.

that the influence of the Celtic Church of the north, in the person of Oswald, had been strong in enabling St. Berin to found the West Saxon church at first, and we have found reasons also for thinking that survivals of the old British Christianity were incorporated into this church much more largely than is commonly supposed ; and thus the climax is fitly reached when we see the churches of Wessex and Cornwall uniting in an act of fellowship which was to convey the succession of their separate episcopates into the church of Paulinus and Aidan.

After Wini's expulsion, Bede states, "the province of the West Saxons was no short time without a prelate." The Chronicle gives its summary of the events under the year 660.

"Bishop Agilberct departed from Cenwalh, and Wini held the bishopric three years, and Agilberct obtained the bishopric of Paris in France by the Seine."

We learn, however, from Bede that Agilberct was in Northumbria in 664, when he ordained Wilfrid to the priesthood at Ripon ; and he is still called "bishop of the West Saxons."¹ His removal to France and his appointment to the See of Paris did not occur till a later year.² The Chronicle speaks of him there in 670.

Thus the West Saxon bishopric was vacant, one of its ex-bishops ruling in London and the other in Paris, and the arbitrary king who had expelled them was too much occupied with his hostile neighbours to heed the things of the Church. The ecclesiastical disorganisation, as well as the civil, must have been complete. For Cenwalh, as Bede continues, "was greatly troubled by his enemies

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, III. 25 ; V. 19.

² Bright, *Early Engl. Ch.*, p. 209.

with very heavy losses to his kingdom." But "at length he bethought himself that his unbelief had caused his banishment from the kingdom before, and he had been restored when he accepted the faith of Christ; so now his province, being destitute of a bishop, was justly deprived of the divine aid."¹ Then followed that penitent appeal to Agilberct to return, and the appointment of Hlothere his nephew, of which mention has been made already. The consecration of Hlothere as bishop of the West Saxons by Theodore of Canterbury seems precisely parallel to the consecration of Chad as bishop of York by Wini of Winchester.

Of Hlothere, Bede writes that "he zealously governed the bishopric of the Gewissæ for many years alone, by synodical sanction." The emphatic statement of Bede that he governed *alone* implies that the division of the great diocese, which had been attempted by Cenwalh, was still kept in view. Hlothere's tenure as sole bishop was to be regarded now as a special arrangement. According to the Chronicle he held the bishopric seven years, being appointed in 670 and succeeded by Headda in 676.

The words of Malmesbury, in which he spoke of the see being confirmed at Winchester by Headda, have been noticed.² Those words are found also in a decree of Archbishop Theodore, preserved by Rudborne,³ which is supposed to have been passed by a synod about the year 679; but the locality of it is unknown, and the authenticity of the document is doubtful. It deals with the question of a division of the West Saxon diocese,

¹ Bede, *H. E.*, III. 7.

² Above, p. 189.

³ *Angl. Sacr.*, p. 193.

insisting that since Headda "had so signally ennobled the church of Wenta by translating to it the body of St. Birin from the town of Dorchester where it was entombed, as well as the see, which was confirmed there by his zeal and apostolic authority," the archbishop "would not injure the diocese by any diminution" during this prelate's life. This can only mean that in consequence of St. Berin's connection with Dorchester that place gave the bishopric an additional dignity which must not be hastily taken away.

But at Headda's death in 705 the diocese was divided, and the church of Sherborne, which appears to have been endowed by a Charter of Cenwalh in 671,¹ some years after he pushed his boundary to the Parret, was now chosen as the seat of a new bishopric for the western districts, to include Berkshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, and Somerset. Eventually, after other bishoprics had been taken from it, this See was transferred to Sarum.

The South Saxons were included in the West Saxon diocese at the time when its first division took place. The evangelisation of Sussex had been long delayed; for this kingdom had no political connections or royal relationships such as those which brought missions from Canterbury to Rochester and London and York; and it was cut off from Wessex by the impenetrable Andreds-weald, which filled the valley between the North and South Downs and is described in the Chronicle as "a hundred and twenty miles or more in length, and thirty miles broad";² and, moreover, the energies of the West Saxon bishops were directed westward and north-

¹ Birch, *Cart. Sax.*, I., No. 26.

² A.S. Chr., a° 893.

ward with the advances made by their nation. Eventually the baptism of Ethelwath took place, as described in the passage which has already been quoted from Bede.¹ He had married a Christian princess named Eata, from among the Hwiccians, and in 661 he himself received baptism in Mercia under the influence of King Wulfhere, who at the same time seized from the West Saxons the Isle of Wight and the neighbouring district of the Meonwaras on the mainland—both Jutish settlements—and gave them as a present to the South Saxon king. Still twenty years passed before any attempt was made to Christianise the people of Sussex. In 681 Bishop Wilfrid, expelled from the see of York, worked among them as a missionary, until he was able five years later to return to his northern see. At that period, 686, Sussex had been newly conquered by Ceadwalha of Wessex, and thus it became subject, as Bede tells us,² to the bishopric of Winchester. At last, some time after the year 709, under Bishop Daniel the successor of Headda, a synod decreed the appointment of a bishop for Sussex, the See-town being fixed at Selsey, where it continued for more than three centuries and a half, until the Normans moved it to Chichester.

After Winchester had finally superseded St. Berin's original See-town at the death of Headda, the history of Dorchester continues to connect itself more and more closely with the Mercian kingdom. In order to follow its history, we have to keep in view the distinction between the two districts of which that kingdom consisted. Both Bede and the Chronicle distinguish between the South Mercians or Middle Angles and the North

¹ Above, p. 111.

² *H. E.*, IV. 15.

Mercians or Southumbrians, the river Trent being the boundary which divided them.¹ And Bede has recorded that "the Middle Angles received the faith and sacraments of the Truth under their prince Peada the son of King Penda."² The Chronicle states that this was in 653, which would be three or four years after the death of St. Berin. The occasion, as Bede has described it, was not unlike that of Cynegils' conversion. Peada had gone to Northumbria to seek the hand of Alchfleda the daughter of Oswy, but the princess was not to be given to a heathen, and the persuasions of Alchfleda's brother, Alchfrid, who had married his sister, led Peada to a hearty acceptance of the faith. The prince, together with the nobles and servants who formed his retinue, was baptised by St. Finan, and took back with him four presbyters, three of them being Angles and the fourth a Scot named Diuma. This last, says Bede, "became bishop of the Midland Angles as also of the Mercians, being ordained by Bishop Finan; for the scarcity of priests made it necessary that one prelate should be set over two peoples."³ Diuma's See-town was perhaps at Repton, perhaps at Leicester;⁴ and eventually, in the time of Chad, the fifth bishop, it was fixed at Lichfield.⁵

Within a quarter of a century from its creation this Mercian diocese had become divided, under the influence of Archbishop Theodore, into several parts. The new See-towns in the south-western portion of the kingdom had been fixed at Hereford and Worcester, where they

¹ Hill, *Engl. Dioceses*, pp. 79-82. Compare Bede, *H. E.*, I. xv.; III. xxi., xxiv.; also Bede, V. xxiv., and A.S. Chr., a° 697.

² *H. E.*, III. xxi.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Hill, *Engl. Dioceses*, p. 82.

⁵ Bede, *H. E.*, IV. iii.

continue to the present day. In the eastern portion also two new sees were formed, one for Lindsey in Lincolnshire, with its See-town (as we are told by Florence of Worcester) at "Siddenacester," which is identified with Stow near Lincoln, the other at Leicester. Florence mentions a third at Dorchester, of which Ætla became bishop in 679; and Bede¹ tells us more fully that Ætla, a monk of Whitby, "was ordained to the bishopric of Dorcie-caestræ." Three years previously Headda (or Heddi, as Bede calls him) had been consecrated bishop of the West Saxons, and it has been supposed by some authorities that Ætla is the same person; but Florence expressly names him as appointed to one of the portions of the Mercian diocese; and Bede, as Dr. Bright has urged, reckons him as one of the five scholarly disciples of Hilda who became bishops, and can scarcely have confounded him with "a prelate whom he repeatedly names Heddi, and expressly describes as *not* learned."² But Wessex, since the death of the last king of the house of Cynegils, was weakened by the dissensions of rival claimants for the throne; Wulfhere of Mercia had seized the opportunity to make a raid on Wiltshire; and "it seems not unlikely" that Ethelred, his brother and successor, may now "have repeated the policy of Wulfhere by invading Wessex on the north, annexing Oxfordshire for the time to Mercia, and installing Ætla in the church of St. Birinus."³ And this agrees with Higden's account, who says that "Eata, a monk of Hilda's monastery at Whitby,"—confusing Ætla with

¹ *H. E.*, IV. 23.

² Bright, *Early Engl. Ch.*, p. 351. Compare Bede, *H. E.*, III. vii.; IV. xii.; V. xviii.

³ Bright, *ibid.*

Eata who became in the previous year bishop of Hexham, —“was ordained to Dorchester; and thus the see of Dorchester, which belonged in Birin’s time to the West Saxons, belonged from Archbishop Theodore’s time to the Mercians.”¹ If this is the true account, the arrangement was a very brief one, for we hear of no more bishops of Dorchester for nearly two hundred years.

The Leicester bishopric, after continuing there for twenty-five years and then being merged into Lichfield again for upwards of thirty years, was separated afresh in 737 and continued until the year 869. The Lindsey bishopric also continued until the same year. But now the north-eastern half of Mercia, including all the Leicester and Lincoln districts, was absorbed in the Danelagh, and its bishoprics were swept away. The Oxford district, meanwhile, had for a century been finally annexed to Mercia by Offa’s victory at Bensington in 777; and as this was outside the boundaries of the Danelagh, the See-town of the East Mercian bishopric was transferred to it, and Dorchester thus regained its former dignity. The diocese is sometimes designated by the title of “Dorchester, Leicester and Lindsey.”²

The new series of bishops of Dorchester began soon after the year 869, when the bishops of the separate sees of Leicester and Lindsey disappear. The first whose name we meet with is Alheard, who must have been consecrated in the interval between that year and 888, when his signature is appended to a charter.³ The Chronicle mentions his death in 897. Two more bishops

¹ *Polychronicon*, I, 55.

² Rev. W. C. Macfarlane, in Parker’s *Dorchester*, p. 19.

³ Bp. Stubbs, *Reg. Sac. Angl.*, p. 224.

of Lindsey are found in the latter half of the tenth century side by side with those of Dorchester;¹ and after the Norman Conquest Lindsey entirely superseded Dorchester, the See-town being removed to Lincoln.

A summary of the final development of the West Saxon and Mercian churches may fitly be appended here. The West Saxon bishopric of Dorchester became, as we have seen, through Winchester the parent church, first of Sherborne, then of Ramsbury, the two being afterwards united in Salisbury; also, a few years later, of Selsey, now Chichester; next of Wells, and also of Crediton, now Exeter; then, under Henry VIII., of Bristol; and again, in our own days, of Truro. The Mercian bishoprics cannot be regarded, except in a very indirect way, as the results of St. Berin's mission; for we have seen that the see of Lichfield, whose earlier offshoots are Hereford and Worcester and whose more recent offshoot is Chester, sprang from the Celtic church of Northumbria. The later Mercian bishopric of Dorchester, having its origin also from that source, through Leicester, and becoming eventually the bishopric of Lincoln, was the parent church of Ely under Henry I., and of Peterborough and Oxford under Henry VIII., and of Southwell in our own days. Thus one-third of our existing English bishoprics trace their descent directly from the Mother Church which St. Berin founded.

¹ Bp. Stubbs, *Reg. Sac. Angl.*, p. 224.

CHAPTER XIV

LITURGICAL COMMEMORATIONS

“Hunc ergo suplex venerare Britannia patrem,
Qui sic de tenebris erroris te revocavit
Ad lumen veræ fidei: tenebræque fuisti,
Nunc autem lux in Domino. Quæ gracia major
Vel melior, cujus majoris vel melioris,
De pœnis ad delicias, de perdicione
Ad vitam, de suppliciis ad gaudia transis?
Ergo quod evadis laqueos, quod libera gaudes,
Istud habes meritis, gratesque referre teneris.”

Alexander Essebiensis, 625-633.

Two festivals of “S. Birinus” are marked in some of the early kalendars of the English Church. December 3 is the festival of the Deposition or burial at Dorchester. September 4 is the festival of the Translation, which some liturgical writers have taken to mean the removal of the saint’s body from Dorchester to Winchester;¹ but it must rather be understood as the enshrinement of the relics at Winchester by St. Ethelwold in 972. The former of these two festivals first appears in the Winchester Kalendar of 867.² The introduction of the other is necessarily of later date. It will be interesting to trace what we can of the history of their observance.

¹ Warren, *Leofric Missal*, App., pp. 272, 280; Stokes, *Martyrology of Gorman*, p. 336.

² Bodl. MS. Digby 63. See above, p. 45.

The letter of Pope Honorius III. in 1224, preserved in the Life of St. Berin in Capgrave's collection, speaks of his name being "contained in the catalogue of the saints."¹ If this is genuine, it must imply that the pope knew him to be commemorated as a saint in England. We should hardly expect to find his name in the martyrology compiled in the time of Charlemagne by Usuard, a monk of Paris, which forms the basis of the majority of Western martyrologies;² and there is no mention of him in the earlier editions of the Roman Martyrology. In the *Viola Sanctorum* of 1487, and as late as Molan's edition of 1568, the name is wanting. But the later editions have the entry, under December 3, "In Anglia, sancti Birini, primi episcopi Dorcestriensis." This was probably inserted in the revision made by Cardinal Baronius for Pope Gregory XIII. in 1586.³ The festival, however, has never been introduced into the Kalendar of the Roman Church.

More remarkable is the lack of recognition accorded to the saint in the mediæval church of England. His name never found its way into the Sarum Kalendar; nor does it appear in the missal which was given to Westminster Abbey by Abbot Lytlington in the fourteenth century, nor in that which was written for St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury at the close of the eleventh century.

Going back to documents of an earlier date, we have no mention of St. Berin in a Martyrology compiled in the north of England in the ninth century.⁴ There are also among the Cotton manuscripts in the British Museum

¹ See above, p. 167.

² Dewick, *The Martiologe*, p. 11.

³ See Card. Baronius' edition, Antwerp, 1613.

⁴ *An Old English Martyrology*, ed. G. Hertzfeld (E. E. Text Soc.), 1900.

three Anglo-Saxon kalendars of the tenth century, which are believed to be based on an original compiled by Bede.¹ The antiquity of the first of these (Julius A. vi.) is shown by the fact that it has no commemoration of St. Swithun, who died in 862 and began very soon to be commemorated. The second (Tiberius B. v.) is described as a "Dano-Saxon poetical menology," and is believed to have been written before 988. The third (Galba A. xviii.), of about the same period, is also metrical, and is known as "King Athelstan's Kalendar." St. Berin is not commemorated in either of these.

Of missals which are known to have been used in the Anglo-Saxon Church, three have come down to us. The first is the "Leofric Missal," given to the church of Exeter by Leofric, who became the first bishop of that see in 1050. It is now in the Bodleian Library. The principal part of it bears evidence of having been written in Lotharingia in the first half of the tenth century, while the kalendar was probably written about 970 and in connection with the abbey of Glastonbury.² But neither part recognises any festival of St. Berin.

When we find that St. Berin's name is absent from the Sarum Kalendar, the question suggests itself whether it can have disappeared in the Norman recension by St. Osmund. But while so many Saxon saints were still commemorated, it is improbable that this name should have been omitted; and with the evidence of Leofric's Kalendar before us, we must rather suppose that St. Berin's festival never found a place in the service-books of the dioceses of Western England. This points to the

¹ Hampson, *Medii Aevi Kalendarium*, I., pp. 392, *sqq.*

² Warren, *Leofric Missal*, pp. xix, xx, xxvi, liv.

inference that it had not been introduced at Winchester when the diocese of Sherborne was separated in 705, though it was nearly thirty years after St. Berin's relics were transferred thither from Dorchester.

We only know, therefore, that the festival of the Deposition was recognised at Winchester in 867. It may have been recently instituted by St. Swithun, who died in 862; or it may have been observed from the time of Bishop Daniel, whose episcopate began in 705 after that of Headda who brought the saint's body from Dorchester; for the institution of such a festival may well have suggested itself to Daniel when he communicated the facts of the history to Bede. But with our present knowledge a century and a half lies open for such conjectures.

There is a service for this festival of the Deposition, and both the festivals of "S. Byrinus" appear in the kalendar, in the second of the Anglo-Saxon missals that we possess, called after Robert of Jumièges and now preserved in the public library at Rouen. It certainly came from Winchester, and probably from the New Minster; for while it has three festivals of St. Swithun and two of St. Birin, they are not marked in the kalendar as of high rank, as they probably would have been in the Old Minster where the saints were enshrined, and only one festival of each of these saints has its special service; whereas there are services for two festivals of St. Ethelwold, whose great reforms may have led to his being honoured above the others in the New Minster, but could hardly have done so in the Old. The Paschal Tables of this missal commence with the year 1000, and its date is assigned to about 1012, the

year of the martyrdom of St. Alphege, whose name was very soon inserted in the kalendars but does not appear in this one. The book was given to the abbey of Jumièges by Robert, bishop of London from 1044 to 1051, who had previously been its abbot, and who subsequently became archbishop of Canterbury.¹ The service for the Deposition has 1, the Collect; 2, the Offertory Prayer (*secreta*); 3, the Preface (*prefatio*); 4, the Concluding Prayer (*ad complendum*); which are as follows:

1. Almighty everlasting God, Who by the pious devotion of blessed Byrin, Thy confessor and our pastor, hast gathered us together into this most sacred fold: Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be found worthy to attain with the same our pastor to the joys of the heavenly life: through our Lord, etc.

2. Let the oblation of our devotion be acceptable to Thee, O Lord; that by the intercession of blessed Byrin, Thy confessor, it may both be pleasing to Thy majesty and profitable to our salvation: through the Lord, etc.

3. It is very meet . . . everlasting God: Who hast vouchsafed to give blessed Byrin Thy confessor to be our teacher, by whom we have been delivered from the darkness of ignorance and found worthy to become the children of eternal light; who showed by example what he taught with his lips; whose life shone forth with noble conduct and was glorious with miracles which are both read in the records of ancient books and are daily repeated anew in working; in whose present patronage we rejoice as we proclaim Thy grace which is shed forth on us abundantly: through Christ our Lord, etc.

4. Refreshed with the mysteries, O Lord God, we

¹ Wilson, *Missale Roberti Gemmeticensis*, pp. xxvii-xxix
Warren, *Leofric Missal*, App., pp. 275-282.

beseech Thee to protect us everywhere by the intercession of blessed Byrin Thy confessor, in whose yearly veneration we have made these oblations unto Thy majesty : through the Lord, etc.

The third of our Anglo-Saxon service-books, containing large portions of a missal together with other offices, and known as the "Red Book of Derby," passed into the possession of Archbishop Parker and is now in the library of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge. Its contents, which include a daily Mass of St. Swithun, indicate that it belonged to the diocese of Winchester ; and as the name of St. Grimbald, who was abbot of the New Minster, is distinguished with capital letters, it is probable that it came from that house. Its table of paschal calculations commences with the year 1061, showing that it was written in that year or shortly afterwards.¹

The entry in the kalendar against September 4 is :

"Translatio sancti Byrini episcopi et sancti Cuthberhti episcopi."

The translation of the body of the great bishop of Lindisfarne to Durham was quite of recent date, having only occurred in 995. Its insertion here shows us how quickly such a commemoration was introduced from a distant church. Here, as in the Jumièges Missal, the two festivals of "S. Birinus" appear in the kalendar ; but as this volume has lost its "Proper of Saints," we cannot tell whether it had a Mass for either of these days.

Another volume, now in the British Museum, consists

¹ Warren, *Leofric Missal*, App., p. 271.

of "a late eleventh-century English missal with an early eleventh-century English kalendar prefixed to it."¹ In this earlier kalendar the only festival "sancti Birini episcopi" is that of December 3. On September 4 the Translation of St. Cuthbert is noted, but not that of St. Birin. The missal appears to be of somewhat later date than those which have been already described, and the numerous proper prefaces, such as we have in the missals of Leofric and of Jumièges, are not found here. But here for the first time we get masses for both the festivals of St. Birin. In that for the Deposition, here called the Birthday (*Natalis*),² the secret and post-communion are the same as those which we have seen in the Jumièges Missal. The collect seems to be based on a foreign one, as its opening clause is found, with the necessary alteration of name, in the collect for St. Simon and St. Jude in the Leofric Missal, which appears again in the Sacramentary of the ninth century from the monastery of Corbie in Picardy, known as "Codex S. Eligii."³ It is:

O God Who through Thy blessed confessor and bishop Byrin hast vouchsafed to call us to the acknowledgment of Thy holy name: mercifully grant that as we celebrate the yearly solemnities of his Deposition, so we may perceive his continual prayers: through, etc.

In the service for the Translation the collect is:

O God Who hast caused us to celebrate the venerated solemnities of this day's festival in the Translation of Thy blessed confessor and bishop Byrin: mercifully

¹ Cott. Ms. Vitell. A. xviii. See Warren, *Leofric Missal*, App., p. 303.

² Fol. 146 of the Ms., but not given in Warren's Appendix.

³ Warren, *Leofric Missal*, pp. xxxiii, 164.

grant that we may ever be aided by his patronage with Thee, as by his holy preaching we have known the author of eternal salvation: through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son.

In the secret and post-communion of this second festival "Beatus Birinus" is named, but there is nothing else distinctive. Since this missal has services for the two festivals of St. Ethelwold and two for St. Swithun, as well as these two for St. Birin, it is evident that it had its origin at Winchester; and the matter common to the Jumièges Missal confirms this. Possibly it belonged to the Old Minster, where it is to be presumed that a service for St. Berin's Translation Day would be first used. If it belonged to the New Minster it shows that a service for this day was introduced there soon after the Norman Conquest.

The earlier kalendar of this missal, as already stated, has St. Birin on December 3 only. And William of Worcester, in his Itinerary of 1478, notes a "Kalendar of Hide near Wynchester" (whither the New Minster was moved in 1110) in which "Sanctus Birinus" is commemorated December 3,¹ but no festival of September 4 is noted; from which we may infer that it was a kalendar written before the removal of the abbey.

We find both the "Translatio sancti Birini episcopi" and the "Deposito" in a kalendar in the Cotton collection (Titus D. xxvii.) in which the Paschal Tables are given from 978 to 1097; but since it has the Translations of St. Cuthbert, 995, and (September 10) of St. Ethelwold who died in 984, it cannot be of earlier date than the first half of the eleventh century.² And in another

¹ *Itineraria . . . Willelmi de Worcestre*, p. 139.

² Hampson, *Med. Æv. Kal.*, I., pp. 434, 492.

of that period, which has been assigned to the time of King Canute and is thought to have belonged to Christ Church, Canterbury, now among the Arundel Mss. in the British Museum,¹ we have the festival "Sancti Byrini episcopi," December 3, and "Translatio Sanctorum Cuthberhti et Byrini episcoporum," September 4. In another kalendar in the Cotton collection (Vitell. E. xviii.), to which the date 1031 has been assigned, there are not only these two festivals, but also the octave of each is marked, that of the Deposition being in the original hand but that of the Translation in a later hand.² Its contents show that it is a Winchester manuscript, and probably of the New Minster, as the Translation of St. Ethelwold is marked with capitals, and the Translation of St. Grimbald has been added.

Both the festivals of St. Berin are in the Irish *Martyrology of Gorman*, compiled about 1170. On December 3 it gives, among other names, *Birin Brigfer* ("Birin, a vigorous man"); and on September 4, "The Translation of Birin," as well as "Cuitbert." But the number of Saxon saints, and especially of those connected with Winchester, who are included in this Martyrology, shows that a Winchester Kalendar was used in the compilation of it, perhaps through the aid of Irish pilgrims to the abbey of Glastonbury with which Winchester was intimately connected.³

Gorman's Martyrology has come down to us in a single manuscript, copied in the earlier part of the seventeenth

¹ Arundel Ms. 155. See Wanley, *Antiquæ Literaturæ Septentrionalis Liber Alter* (1705), p. 293.

² Hampson, *Med. Æv. Kal.*, I., pp. 421-433.

³ Stokes, *Mart. of Gorman*, pp. xviii, xix, xlv, 170, 230. See above, ch. II., p. 46.

century by Michael O'Clery, a Franciscan friar of Donegal, and now in the Royal Library at Brussels. In 1630 O'Clery compiled also, from this and other sources, his *Martyrology of Donegal*,¹ in which he gives the name *Birin* in the Table of Saints, and "Birín epscop" in the kalendar on December 3, but ignores the festival of September 4. The name, of course, does not appear in the Irish Felire of Oengus the Culdee, compiled early in the ninth century.

To sum up the early history of the festival of September 4, we may probably assume that after the saint's relics were translated in the Old Minster at Winchester in 972 the ceremony would be commemorated annually in that church; and we have found reason to believe that some forty years after the event, at the latest, this second festival of St. Berin had been inserted in the Kalendar of the New Minster, though for a time at least no Mass was appointed for it, as the Jumièges Missal shows. We have only met with such a Mass late in the eleventh century, and it may have belonged either to the Old or to the New Minster.

The Bodleian Library has a very beautiful manuscript of about the year 1037, written in the style of the Winchester scribes, either for Peterborough or for Ely, perhaps at one of those places or perhaps at the Old Minster at Winchester.² It contains psalms, canticles, and other devotional passages, together with a kalendar in which December 3 is marked as the festival "Sancti Byrini," but September 4 is the Translation of St. Cuthbert only.

¹ Ed. Todd, Dublin, 1864.

² Bodl. Ms. Douce 296. For its history I am indebted to the kindness of Bodley's Librarian.

The inference is that the observance of St. Berin's Translation Day was not yet recognised in the church for which this manuscript was compiled.

The festival of the Deposition only (*S. Birini episcopi commemoratio*) is found in the Kalendar of the Hereford Missal, both in the single manuscript copy that is known (written in the fourteenth century, and now in the library of University College, Oxford), and in the single edition which was printed (Rouen, 1502).¹ There is also a proper service for this day. Though the diocese sprang from a Scottish source, through Lindisfarne, the collect seems to regard St. Birin as its apostle.

O God Who hast bestowed upon us Saint Birin the bishop to be the teacher of eternal salvation : mercifully grant that as we observe the yearly solemnity of his Deposition, so we may be aided by his merits and prayers : through, etc.

This, however, is not an original reminiscence of any evangelistic work that the saint may have done in Mercia ; for the same collect, with the requisite variations, serves for the Translation of St. Ethelwold in the Jumièges Missal, and thus its Winchester origin is betrayed. The *secreta* and *post-communio* are quite colourless, and would serve for the festival of any saint.

There is reason to think that although the observance of this festival had been adopted in Hereford Cathedral, it was not universal in the diocese ; for the British Museum possesses, in the Harleian Collection, a Norman-French kalendar of about the fourteenth century, which is believed to have belonged to the church of Ludlow ; and it has no commemoration of St. Berin, nor are the

¹ Henderson, *Missale ad Usum Eccl. Herford*, pp. iii, iv.

names of the Winchester saints generally to be found in it.¹

Another of the Harleian manuscripts, containing internal evidence of having belonged to the church of Exeter, has a kalendar which is assigned to the time of Henry II.² It shows that at that period the festival of St. Berin's Deposition had become recognised at Exeter but though it has festivals of several of the Winchester saints, including two of St. Swithun, the second festival of St. Berin does not appear.

There are other kalendars in which the Deposition is treated as of less importance than the Translation; or the former is even omitted while the latter is observed. This is easily understood if we bear in mind the distinction between the two. The festival of a saint's death and burial—sometimes called his "natal" day, on which he was born into the other world—commemorated him as he had lived on earth in the past; the other festival was in honour of his bodily presence in the shrine, where his relics were still believed to be working miracles. Thus in the religion of the period the festival of the Translation became by far the more important, and entirely superseded the other in the popular estimation. A parallel may not unfairly be noted at the present day, when the Harvest Thanksgiving, as a festival of merely natural religion, often practically overshadows in its popularity the ancient festivals of Christianity. Thus the celebration of a Translation festival was the most attractive function of the year in the church which contained the shrine; and if that church happened to be

¹ Harl. Ms. Cod. 273. See Hampson, I., pp. 448, 461-472.

² Harl. Ms. Cod. 863. See Hampson, I., pp. 448-460.

one of far-reaching influence, the observance of its great day became correspondingly extensive up and down the land.

When therefore we find that only the Deposition of St. Birin was observed at Hereford, for instance, we may infer that it was introduced there at an earlier date; and when in other churches we find only the Translation, we presume that the saint was not commemorated there until later times.

The York Kalendar gives the Translation only, and this is necessarily subsidiary to the Translation of St. Cuthbert on the same day. There is no Mass of St. Birin, but in the Breviary we have the interesting "*Lectiones de Sancto Birino*" which have been quoted already. They are the "*mediæ lectiones*" at matins, being preceded by those of St. Cuthbert and followed by those from the Gospel. We have seen reason to believe that these lections for St. Berin's Day came from Winchester, and we may presume that they were brought to York at the same time that the festival was introduced there, which was probably not until a late date, since the older festival is ignored.

The observance of this festival at York affords an illustration of the wide influence which the church of Winchester exercised; and we find a similar illustration of it from another distant quarter in the Kalendar of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, as copied by William of Worcester in 1478, which gives the "*Translacio Sancti Berini Episcopi 4 die Septembris id est die Sancti Cuthberti.*"¹ The names of several Cornish saints intermixed with Saxons, and an enumeration of the twenty-

¹ Nasmith, p. 129. See above, p. 44.

four children of King Brocan, show that it is a genuine Cornish kalendar.

A Martyrology compiled by Richard Whytford, a brother of the monastery of Syon in Middlesex, was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1526, and entitled *The Martiloge in englysshe after the use of the chirche of Salisbury, and as it is redde in Syon, with addicions*.¹ In it we have, December 3, "At wynchester the feest of saynt Byryne a byssshop and confessour"; and September 4, "The translacyon of saynt Cutbert and of saynt Byryne bothe bysshops of synguler sanctite." Whytford was wrong in describing the Martyrology of Syon as a Sarum book. He probably assumed that it was so because the Sarum Missal and Offices were used in that monastery. But the fact that the two festivals of St. Osmund are not found here is sufficient proof that he was mistaken. His version corresponds substantially with a Latin Martyrologium of the fifteenth century which belonged to the monastery of Syon and is now in the British Museum (Add. MS. 22,285). This appears to have been originally compiled for the church of Shaftesbury, for it has additional commemorations of St. Edward the Martyr, and a festival of St. Elgiva the wife of Edmund the Magnificent, both of whom were enshrined there. As the same festivals are found in the "Red Book of Derby,"² which has already been noticed as a Winchester manuscript,³ the insertion of St. Byryne's name must also be connected with Winchester. And indeed the

¹ The notes which follow are chiefly derived from Mr. Dewick's Introduction to the reprint of *The Martiloge* (H. Bradshaw Soc.), 1893.

² See Warren, *Leofric Missal*, App., p. 271.

³ Page 204.

Martyrology of Whytford mentions his commemoration on December 3 as a Winchester festival.

We have an incidental note which shows that St. Berin's Day was kept at Dorchester. It occurs in a deed executed in the year 1458, whereby the abbot and convent grant to Edmund Rede, esquire, the advowson of the church of Werplesgrave or Warpsgrove, reserving to themselves a yearly pension of forty pence to be paid to them by the rector for the time being "on the feast of St. Birin, bishop and confessor."¹ There the festival of September 4 would of course be ignored. It is possible that there may have been a yearly commemoration of the false enshrinement in the abbey; but in the absence of any evidence for this we must presume that the festival was that of the Deposition on December 3.

It is curious to notice that within seven miles of Dorchester, where the convent so stoutly affirmed that they possessed the true body of St. Berin, the Benedictine monks of Abingdon duly observed the festival of his Translation at Winchester as well as that of his Deposition. They had also among their relics, according to an inventory taken by Abbot Faritius in 1116, "a rib of St. Birin";² and it may well have been a genuine one, given to them at the time of the saint's enshrinement by St. Ethelwold, since the Old Minster had then been lately repopled from Abingdon at the expulsion of the secular clergy in 963. The close relationship between the two houses would naturally ensure that sooner or later the festivals which belonged especially to Winchester would

¹ Cartul. de Borstall, f. cxxxvii, in Kennett, *Paroch. Antiq.*, p. 676 (cf. Addington's *Dorchester*, p. 87).

² *Chron. Monast. de Abingdon* (Rolls Ser., 2), Vol. II., p. 158.

be observed here. And thus the *Book of Blessed Mary of Abendon*, already mentioned¹ as having had its origin from Winchester, contains a full service for both these days. The only missal corresponding with it in this respect is that which has been noticed as a compilation of the latter part of the eleventh century.² This Abingdon book, however, is not a missal, and the services of St. Birin are the only strictly liturgical portion of its contents. The inference is that it was written with a view to the introduction of these festivals in a church where they had not previously been observed, so that it might be used on those two days as an appendix to the existing missal. Hence we may suppose, from the date of the manuscript, that St. Berin's festivals began to be kept at Abingdon about a century, more or less, after the Norman Conquest. A parallel to this may be noted in a Pontifical of the eleventh century, now in the library of Sidney Sussex College at Cambridge,³ which has at the end a single Mass for St. Cuthbert's Day, as if to introduce its observance in the diocese for which the Pontifical was compiled. But the services in the Abingdon book are of little value in themselves. While each of the two days has its proper collect, secret, preface, and post-communion, none of the eight passages has any special fitness for St. Berin's festivals except that he is mentioned by name in each. With a change of name, each would serve equally well for any other confessor-bishop. The preface for September 4 will serve as a specimen :

It is very meet . . . eternal God : Whose mercy we

¹ Bodl. Ms. Digby 39. See above, p. xvii.

² Above, p. 205. ³ Warren, *Leofric Missal*, App., p. 302.

implore, that we who celebrate the translation of the holy bishop Byrin may be made worthy to serve Thee faithfully, and so to be nourished in the present that after the debt of the flesh is paid Thou mayest cause us to be joined to his glory.

Immediately before these liturgical passages there is "A Homily (*omelia*) to be solemnly recited on his sacred festival." It is evidently inserted here for the purpose of being read at the celebration of the Mass. As it is in itself both curious and interesting, and as it contains points which serve to illustrate St. Berin's history, an English rendering of the Homily will be given in the Appendix.¹

And immediately after the liturgical passages the manuscript gives the heading of "A hymn of rejoicing (*carmen jubilationis*) composed alphabetically in metre concerning St. Birin, and [to be sung] in his praise, or whenever thou wilt, for the festivity (*gaudio*) of his Deposition, which is the third day before the nones of December." But the folio which contained this hymn is lost. The *Jubilatio* was one of the titles of the hymn appended to the Gradual, which was sung between the Epistle and Gospel; its more usual titles being *Prosa* or *Sequentia*.² We may conclude that this was the character of the hymn which has unfortunately disappeared from the Abingdon manuscript.

We have, however, a Prose of St. Berin in the earliest Troper, or book of Proses, which has been preserved.³ As it contains a litany in which Ethelred is prayed for as

¹ Note VII.

² See Scudamore, *Notit. Euch.*, pp. 254, 255 (ed. 1876).

³ MS. Bodl. 775. See Henderson's *York Missal* (Surtees Soc., 60), II., pp. xviii, 297, and Maskell, *Mon. Rit.*, I., pp. xl, xli.

the reigning king, it cannot have been compiled later than the year 1017. It contains ninety proses, several of which are believed to have been composed by Alcuin, the famous master of the Cathedral School of York in the eighth century. The influence of Winchester in this compilation is manifest ; for the only festivals of saints to which as many as three sequences are assigned are those of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of All Saints, of SS. Peter and Paul, and of St. Swithun ; and of eight saints of later than apostolic date only St. Swithun, St. Ethelwold, and St. Benedict have more than one sequence assigned to them ; while the only other English saint in the list is St. Augustine. The following is a translation of the *Prosa de Sancto Birino* (No. xxxvii.) :

“ Alleluya.

Sky, sea, earth, and all things that are,
 To the Lord Who rules the heavens with highest power let the
 pipes of praise be joyful,
 And let this present throng with kindly mind and harmonious
 voice sound forth their songs.
 For He the broad places of the world and the long spaces of
 the lands
 Hath enlightened with catholic doctrine, giving them His sacred
 commandments,
 Choosing apostolic teachers endowed with strongest faith
 And holiness, and also with wondrous knowledge.
 From their lofty and conspicuous citadel
 Comes Birin like a shining jewel ;
 And this province through the merits of his virtues
 Holds the catholic sacraments and foundations.
 Him God's providence before the ages filled with so great grace
 That he came to the barbarous nation of his own accord,
 supported by intrepid faith.
 The king in the laver of regeneration he speedily regenerates,
 and the vast nation he forms for the heavenly kingdoms.
 All ye, lift up the heads of your mind on high, bring to Christ
 the songs of praises with clear-sounding voice,
 That He hath granted us so great a candle of light by the
 presence of this Father.

Let us all cry aloud together with one accord, O Christ, save us for ever."¹

We may notice lastly the invocations of St. Berin in some ancient litanies. One such litany, for special use in the New Minster at Winchester, is contained—together with a miscellaneous collection of notes, devotional, astronomical, medical—in a manuscript written by Ælfwine who became abbot of that house in 1035. This litany invokes "Sancte Birine" in a series of twenty-four confessors.² And in the "Red Book of Derby," already noticed as a missal of the same monastery written about the date of the Norman Conquest,³ there are two litanies, one in the Order of Baptism and the other in that of the Visitation and Unction of the Sick, in each of which St. Birin is similarly invoked.⁴ And there is the same invocation, *Sancte Byrine ora*, in a litany contained in the manuscript which was written under Winchester influence either for Peterborough or for Ely about 1037, now in the Bodleian Library.⁵ Another early instance is in the manuscript already mentioned which has been assigned to the time of King Canute.⁶ It has an "Oratio ad Sanctos Confessores" invoking, after certain others, "Judoce, Byrine, Swythune, Grimbolde, Athelwolde." These names obviously come from Winchester. St. Judoc was a royal

¹ Hardy's *Descriptive Catalogue*, I. i., pp. 237, 238, mentions also (Nos. 630, 635) a Latin hymn in honour of St. Birinus in Ms. Alençon 4 of the twelfth century, and some French verses in Ms. Bibl. de la Ville de Rouen, Hist. 82.

² Cott. Ms. Titus D. xxvi., in Birch's *Liber Vitæ of Hyde*, App. D., p. 264.

³ Page 204.

⁴ Warren, *Leofric Missal*, App., p. 272.

⁵ Ms. Douce 296. See above, p. 208.

⁶ Arundel Ms. 155. See above, p. 207.

hermit of Brittany who died about 668, and whose relics were brought over to the New Minster at Winchester by some refugees in 903, the same year that St. Grimbald the abbot died and the New Minster was consecrated.¹ In several of the litanies which have been mentioned these two saints are invoked among those connected with Winchester.

In the Sarum Processional the litany for the Friday of the second week of Lent invokes St. Birin among the other saints (*Sancte Birine ora*), and there is the same invocation in the litany of Rogation Monday. In the latter case his name is the last in a series of twelve confessors, and in each case it is placed after St. Swithun, so little was St. Berin's true position realised. It should be observed that although the book is "according to the Use of Sarum," the first edition of it was printed in 1508 under the auspices of Bishop Fox of Winchester,² and as older copies are not forthcoming it is impossible to say whether names were added or altered in accordance with Winchester usage.

The Sarum Manual has a litany for the commendation of a soul at the point of death, in which St. Birin's name stands in its true historical position. Among six English confessors he is invoked (*Sancte Birine intercede*) second, after St. Augustine and before Saints Swithun, Æthelwold, Dunstan and Cuthbert.³ But in the corresponding litany of the York Use, in the Order of the Visitation of the Sick, there is no invocation of St. Birin, nor in other

¹ A.S. Chr., a° 903.

² Henderson, *Process. ad Usum Eccl. Sarum*, p. vi. See pp. 36, 108.

³ Henderson's *York Manual* (Surtees Soc., 63), App., p. 53*.

litanies of the York Processional and Manual, though St. Swithun's name occurs in them.¹ Thus we find that invocations of St. Swithun had been introduced into this ritual in both the leading English Uses, and St. Birin's name was subsequently added in the Sarum Use but never in that of York. It would be easy to enumerate other examples of such litanies in which this name is not found; and its absence from these forms of devotion shows the neglect into which the saint's memory had fallen in the mediæval Church, as clearly as its omission in many modern books of English history shows the prevailing ignorance of the high position which he held among those who made England Christian.

¹ Henderson's *York Manual* (Surtees Soc., 63), App., pp. 44, 168.

CHAPTER XV

CHURCH DEDICATIONS AND MODERN MEMORIALS

“ But dearer far the churchyard-slope
We trod at even-fall,
Beneath the graceful window-line
That decks the southern wall
Of that majestic minster, named
From Peter and from Paul.

O river-marge of purest fame
When Oxford's self was not !
O ne'er by Britain's angel-friends
Through changing times forgot !
To fancy's eye what forms return
To glorify the spot !

A Bishop, whom the love of souls
From Genoa's port could bring,
With clerks to aid in solemn rite,
And boys to serve and sing,
Is here, to make the Thames a font
For our West Saxon king.

All hail, Birinus ! not in vain
Thy zeal to teach and pray ;
The House ordained to wax in might
Till England owns its sway
In this thy convert, Cynegils,
Is Christianized to-day.”

Bright's *Hymns and other Verses* (ed. 2).

DORCHESTER ABBEY,¹ according to Dugdale, “ was built by Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, about the year 1140,

¹ Fuller, in his *Worthies of England* (Oxfordshire, p. 331 ; see Addington's *Dorchester*, p. 42, Note C), speaks of a monastery here in the ninth century, called *Cornhouse*, to which St. Edwold, the brother of St. Edmund, retired ; but the reference to Malmesbury shows that this was Cerne Abbey in Dorset, *Gesta Pontif.*, II. 84.

to the honour of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Birinus." ¹ It does not appear that the older church had borne this dedication. And when the church of the Austin canons was thus re-dedicated, St. Peter's name was still allowed to stand as the most prominent of the three ; for the seal of the abbey, appended to the deed of acknowledgment of the king's supremacy in 1534 in the chapter-house at Westminster, calls it *Conventus Sancti Petri*, and bears a figure of St. Peter with the keys.²

After the translation of St. Berin's relics to Winchester, according to Malmesbury, "he is accounted the patron of this city after God."³ And Rudborne, the Winchester historian, calls him "the first patron and apostle of this province."⁴ The ancient Homily for his festival makes much of this patronage.⁵ And in the preface of the Mass of his Deposition in the Winchester "Missal of Jumièges" the worshippers are "rejoicing in his present patronage."⁶ The patron saints of the cathedral are reckoned as six in number, namely SS. Peter, Paul, Birin, Swithun, Headda, and Ethelwold.⁷ We learn from a late copy of the Saxon Chronicle ⁸ that "Cenwalh had the minster at Winchester built in St. Peter's name." Soon afterwards, if not at first, the name of St. Paul was added ; for Bede, relating St Berin's translation thither, calls it "the church of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul." Rudborne, after the strange misstatement that St. Birin had dedi-

¹ Dugdale, *Monasticon*, Vol. VI., p. 323 (ed. 1836).

² *Sigillum Conventus Sancti Petri Dorces.* Addington, pp. 96, 104.

³ *Gest. Pont.*, II. 75.

⁴ *Hist. Major Winton.*, II., c. iii. (*Angl. Sacr.*, p. 192).

⁵ Appendix, Note VII.

⁶ Above, p. 203.

⁷ See Dean Kitchin's *Screen of Winchester Cathedral*, p. 14.

⁸ Ms. Cott. Domit. A. viii.

cated it to the Holy Trinity, adds that it was known in his time as the Church of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Swithun;¹ and he also speaks of St. Swithun as "the special patron of this church."² The name of St. Swithun was added when the church was re-dedicated in 980 after its repair and enlargement by Bishop Ethelwold, at the same time that the relics of the saint were enshrined, and from that date it was commonly called St. Swithun's.³ But it does not appear that the name of St. Berin, or those of Saints Headda and Ethelwold, were ever added as among those to whom the church is dedicated; but they were accounted patrons because they were enshrined in it.

There seems to be no record of any other church bearing St. Berin's name in ancient times; and this is one among the many proofs of the lack of honour that was paid to him.

Two churches in Scotland, however, have been spoken of as being dedicated, the one certainly, the other probably, to St. Berin. The one is a parish in Ayrshire bearing the name of Kilbirnie, "the church of Birnie." According to the *New Statistical Account of Scotland* (1845)⁴ the Birnie of this dedication is Birinus, though no trace of any commemoration of him survives, whilst that of St. Brandane, the apostle of the Orkneys, is still observed in the village by a great annual fair on May 28, known as "Brinnan's Day." This seems to be sufficient proof that the Scottish Brinnan or Brendan, rather than the apostle of Wessex, is the saint who gave

¹ *Hist. Major Winton.*, II., c. ii. (*Angl. Sacr.*, pp. 190, 192).

² *Ibid.* III., c. xii. (p. 223).

³ Milner's *Winchester*, II., pp. 7, 8 (1809).

⁴ Ayrshire, p. 689.

his name to Kilbirnie, unless there is direct evidence, which is not given, for the other dedication. The statement has been endorsed by Bishop Forbes in his *Kalendars of Scottish Saints*.¹ Yet the name of Birinus does not appear in any of the ancient kalendars contained in that volume. We are reminded, indeed, that it is found in the Irish *Martyrology of Donegal*; but there, as has been already noted,² it was inserted from the earlier *Martyrology of Gorman*, into which it had been copied from an English source. Bishop Forbes adds also that "probably the parish of Dumbarny, in the most beautiful part of Strathearn, takes its name from this saint."³ But this seems to rest upon no evidence other than the resemblance of the name, and Dumbarny is probably, from *Dun* and *Barnach*, "the Stronghold of the Pass."

In recent years a church of St. Birinus has been dedicated at Morgan's Vale in the parish of Downton in Wiltshire;⁴ this being part of the lands with which, according to the Charter of King Athelstan already noticed,⁵ Cenwalh originally endowed the see of Winchester. Still more recently the chapel of the Bishop's Palace at Bristol has been dedicated "in memory of St. Birinus, St. Chad, and St. Aldhelm, the apostles of the several parts of this diocese."⁶

A beautiful little chapel of St. Birinus, which also deserves mention, was erected at Dorchester in 1849 for the worship of the Church of Rome, with a fine statue

¹ Pages 279, 280. See also *Dict. of Christian Biogr.*, art. *Birinus*.

² Page 208.

³ *Kal. of Scottish Saints*, p. 280.

⁴ F. Arnold Foster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, I., p. 395.

⁵ See above, p. 109.

⁶ *Guardian*, June 3, 1901.

of the saint adorning its western front, and with representations of scenes from his history in the chancel windows, in one of which he receives his commission from Pope Honorius, and in the other he is baptising King Cynegils.

Certainly of late the memory of the great missionary has been receiving fuller recognition. The restoration of his statue among the rest on the great altar-screen of Winchester Cathedral has been already described. And upon the episcopal seal engraved in 1895 for the Bishop of Winchester, St. Berin's figure occupies the central niche, between St. Peter and St. Paul. "As missionary-bishop he holds in his extended right hand a baptismal shell, and in his left a crozier. The waves beneath his feet recall the legend of his having walked upon the English Channel dryshod."¹

His figure is represented also upon the pastoral staff of the Bishop of Reading, holding in his hand the Chalice and Host, presumably with reference to the mediæval legend. Here, therefore, as on the Winchester seal, the legend is well taken to serve as a parable of the saint's work and his courage in facing the perils of the sea to bring the Sacraments of Christ to England.

In stained glass St. Berin has been occasionally depicted, but the small panels in the choir of Dorchester Abbey, already noticed,² are probably the only ancient examples now remaining in which he appears. In the modern glass of the east window of this church there are four well-executed panels, representing St. Peter and St. Paul with two bishops between them; the one being St.

¹ *Winchester Diocesan Chronicle*, May 1896, p. 68.

² Page 180, and Appendix, Note IV.

Berin, as the third patron of the Abbey, holding Chalice and Host, and the other being Remigius, holding a church with three towers, as the founder of Lincoln Minster. There also a new light has recently been placed in a re-opened Norman window of the nave, as a memorial to the late vicar, William Macfarlane, the foremost restorer of the church and founder of the Missionary College at Dorchester. The plan of the subjects in this window was suggested by the eminent Church historian, Dr. Bright. It contains a full-sized figure of "Saint Birinus"; above this is a panel in which the bishop is being enthroned by the two kings, and Dorchester Church is at his feet; and another panel below represents the Baptism of Cynegils, who kneels, holding his sceptre, while the bishop pours the water from a shell upon him, and St. Oswald as god-father is behind him. In the apex of the window is the shield of the abbey, bearing St. Peter's keys and St. Paul's sword.

In the Lady Chapel of Winchester Cathedral the south window contains glass in memory of Bishop Anthony Thorold, St. Berin's eighty-third successor in that bishopric. It represents scenes in the Life of our Lord, while the upper lights have figures of St. Berin, of Pope Honorius who sent him, and of Saints Swithun and Alphege.

St. Berin's history is said to have been represented at Lincoln Cathedral, both in the sculptures of Remigius' work in the west front, and in the glass,¹ whether of St. Hugh's time at the close of the twelfth century or of later date. But the subjects of the Norman sculptures are all scriptural,² and the existing remains of ancient glass

¹ Warton, *History of English Poetry*, Vol. I., Dissert. II. (1774).

² See a paper by Bp. Trollope in *Lincoln Dioc. Archit. Soc. Report*, 1886, p. 280.

show nothing which necessarily connects itself with St. Berin. He is commemorated at Lincoln in modern glass in the bishop's chapel at the Old Palace, and with him are St. Paulinus, St. Guthlac, and St. Hugh. Another example, though in a less conspicuous place, seems worthy of being noted here. In the Norman church of Blewbury, at the foot of Churn Hill where the tradition tells that he began his mission in the midland district,¹ there is a well-executed window representing St. Berin, with the designation of "Apostle of the Western English,"² in accordance with his original commission from Honorius; and in a small panel below he appears baptising King Cynegils, with St. Oswald standing beside the font. In the neighbouring church of Wantage, also, St. Berin appears, holding Chalice and Host, together with St. Wolfstan of Worcester and St. Hugh of Lincoln, in a window of the south chapel which has been renovated as a memorial to the late William Butler, successively Vicar of Wantage, Canon of Worcester, and Dean of Lincoln.

St. Berin has his place also, with eleven other first-founders of the Anglo-Saxon churches, in a window given by the late Duke of Westminster in the north transept of St. Paul's Cathedral; though there seems to be no name or sign by which his figure can be distinguished from the other bishops. With him are Augustine and Mellitus, who had gone before him; and his own contemporaries, Paulinus and Aidan and Felix; and those who followed, Cedd and Chad, Diuma, Erconwald, and Wilfrid; and

¹ Above, p. 117.

² The inscription is, "*S. Birinus Angl. Occid. Apost. A.S. 650.—A.S. Burgess. Vivas in Xro.—H.P.L. 1887.*" It was the gift of Dr. Liddon in memory of a friend.

lastly Theodore, who was the great organiser of the results of their work. The opposite window, in the south transept, is occupied by twelve kings under whom the kingdoms of the Heptarchy were brought into the Church. First in order is Ethelbert of Kent; and among them are also Cynegils the convert of St. Berin, and Oswald who aided his mission, and Cenwalh the son of Cynegils.¹ It is well that on the sacred spot where Christ is worshipped in the midst of the wealth and splendour of England's capital the light of heaven should fall through the bright memorials of our first Christian kings and of the saints who taught them the Christian Faith.

¹ See a paper on *The Recent Decoration of St. Paul's* [by the Bishop (Browne) of Stepney], 1896.

APPENDIX

NOTE I

SUCCESSION OF BISHOPS FROM ST. BERIN TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD¹

1. St. Berin, 1st missionary bishop in Wessex and Mercia,	635
2. Agilbert, 2nd	650
3. Wini, bp. in Wessex,	662 Jarumnan, bp. in Mercia, 662
4. Hlothere, ,,	670 Chad, bp. of Lichfield, 669
5. Headda, bp. of Winchester,	676 Winfrid, ,, 672
6. Daniel, ,,	705 Saxulf, ,, 675
7. Hunferth, ,,	744 Hedda, ,, 691
8. Kynheard, ,,	754 Aldwin, ,, 721
9. Ethelhard, ,,	c. 766 Torthelm, bp. of Leicester, 737
10. Ecgbald, ,,	c. 770 to 781 Eadbert, ,, 764 to 781
11. Unwona, bp. of Leicester,	781
12. Werenbert, ,,	802
13. Hrethun, ,,	816
14. Aldred, ,,	839
15. Ceolred, ,,	840
16. Alheard, bp. of Dorchester,	869
17. Ceolwulf, ,,	909
18. Winsy, ,,	c. 909
19. Oskytel, ,,	950
20. Leofwin, ,,	958
21. Eadnoth, ,,	c. 965
22. Escwy, ,,	c. 975
23. Alfhelm, ,,	1002
24. Eadnoth II., ,,	1006

¹ As it is impossible to fix the date at which Dorchester passed from the jurisdiction of the West Saxon to that of the Mercian bishops, 661 to 777, it has seemed desirable to give the succession in both lines during that period.

25. Ethelric, bp. of Dorchester,	1016
26. Eadnoth III.,	1034
27. Ulf,	1050
28. Wulfwy,	1053
29. Remigius,	1067
30. Robert Bloett, bp. of Lincoln,	1094
31. Alexander,	1123
32. Robert de Chesney,	1148
33. Walter de Coutances,	1183
34. Hugh of Grenoble,	1186
35. William of Blois,	1203
36. Hugh de Wells,	1209
37. Robert Grossteste,	1235
38. Henry Lexington,	1254
39. Richard Gravesend,	1258
40. Oliver Sutton,	1280
41. John D'Alderby,	1300
42. Henry Burghersh,	1320
43. Thomas Beck,	1342
44. John Gynwell,	1347
45. John Bokyngham,	1363
46. Henry Beaufort,	1398
47. Philip Repingdon,	1405
48. Richard Fleming,	1420
49. William Gray,	1431
50. William Alnwick,	1436
51. Marmaduke Lumley,	1450
52. John Chadworth,	1452
53. Thomas Rotherham,	1472
54. John Russell,	1480
55. William Smith,	1496
56. Thomas Wolsey,	1514
57. William Atwater,	1514
58. John Longlands,	1521
59. Robert King, bp. of Oxford,	1541
60. Hugh Curwen,	1567
61. John Underhill,	1589
62. John Bridges,	1604
63. John Howson,	1619
64. Richard Corbett,	1628
65. John Bancroft,	1632
66. Robert Skinner,	1641
67. William Paul,	1663
68. Walter Blandford,	1665
69. Nathaniel Crewe,	1671
70. Henry Compton,	1674

71.	John Fell, bp. of Oxford,	1676
72.	Samuel Parker, ,, ,,	1686
73.	Timothy Hall, ,, ,,	1688
74.	John Hough, ,, ,,	1690
75.	William Talbot, ,, ,,	1699
76.	John Potter, ,, ,	1715
77.	Thomas Secker, ,, ,,	1737
78.	John Hume, ,, ,,	1758
79.	Robert Louth, ,, ,,	1766
80.	John Butler, ,, ,,	1777
81.	Edward Smallwell, ,, ,,	1788
82.	John Randolph, ,, ,,	1799
83.	Charles Moss, ,, ,,	1807
84.	William Jackson, ,, ,,	1812
85.	Edward Legge, ,, ,,	1816
86.	Charles Lloyd, ,, ,,	1827
87.	Richard Bagot, ,, ,,	1829
88.	Samuel Wilberforce, ,, ,,	1845
89.	John Fielder Mackarness, ,, ,,	1870
90.	William Stubbs, ,, ,,	1889
91.	Francis Paget, ,, ,,	1901

NOTE II

DESCENT OF KING EDWARD VII. FROM THE KINGS OF THE
WEST SAXONS, SHOWING THE CONNECTION WITH
KING CYNEGILS.¹

1.	CERDIC	
2.	CYNRIC	
3.	CEAWLIN	Cutha
4.	Cuthwine	CEOLRIC or CEOL
5.	Cutha or Cuthwulf	CYNEGILS
6.	Ceolwald	
7.	Cenred	
8.	Ingild	
9.	Eoppa	

¹ The names of those who reigned are printed in Capitals. The earlier names are taken from the Table in Lappenberg's *History of England under the Anglo-Saxon Kings*.

10. Eafa
11. Ealhmund
12. ECGBERHT
13. ETHELWULF
14. ALFRED
15. EDWARD THE ELDER
16. EDMUND
17. EDGAR
18. ETHELRED THE UNREADY
19. EDMUND IRONSIDE
20. Edward the Exile
21. Margaret = Malcolm III. of Scotland
22. Matilda = HENRY I.
23. Matilda = Geoffrey Plantagenet
24. HENRY II.
25. JOHN
26. HENRY III.
27. EDWARD I.
28. EDWARD II.
29. EDWARD III.
30. Edmund Duke of York
31. Richard Earl of Cambridge
32. Richard Duke of York
33. EDWARD IV.
34. Elizabeth = HENRY VII.
35. Margaret = James IV. of Scotland
36. James V. of Scotland
37. Mary Queen of Scots = Henry Lord Darnley
38. JAMES I.
39. Elizabeth = Frederic, Elector Palatine
40. Sophia = Ernest, Elector of Hanover
41. GEORGE I.
42. GEORGE II.
43. Frederick Prince of Wales
44. GEORGE III.
45. Edward Duke of Kent
46. VICTORIA
47. EDWARD VII.

NOTE III

ON THE EFFIGY OF A BISHOP AT DORCHESTER ¹

There can be no doubt that the effigy of a bishop, now in the south chapel of Dorchester Church, is the same that Leland described in his Itinerary in 1542 :

"There yet remainith the Image of Free Stone that lay on the Tumbe of Bishop Æschwine, as apperith by the Inscription."²

Hearne, in a letter of 1711 appended to his edition of this Itinerary,³ writes :

"I spent several Hours in the Church on purpose to find out the said Monument of Bishop Æschwine ; but I could not, after the most diligent Search, find the least Fragment of it. . . . I perceive also by some Manuscript Papers that Mr. Wood [Anthony à Wood] sought after this venerable old Monument to no purpose."

But Gough, in his edition of Camden's *Britannia* (1789),⁴ writes :

"In the south aile lies the defaced freestone figure of a bishop, dug up lately in the north aile, perhaps Æschwine."

It lay for many years on the altar-platform in the south aisle of the nave, until in the recent renovations it was placed upon a stone base against the south side of the choir-screen.

Æschwine is only recorded in the Chronicle as one of two prelates whom King Ethelred the Unready called upon, together with the traitorous alderman Ælfric, to oppose the Danes in 992. By a charter dated 995, "being smitten with fear of God," he restores to the church of Canterbury, "to which it rightly belongs," the manor of Risborough, which Archbishop Sigeric had given him "as security for money received from him."⁵ He also assisted at the consecration of the monastery of Ramsey in Huntingdonshire in 991.⁶ He died in 1002, after holding the see twenty-three years.⁷ This appears to be all that is known of his episcopate, and his name "adds nothing to the history of the diocese."⁸ It is difficult, therefore, to imagine on what grounds a monument could have been

¹ See ch. XII., p. 178.

² Addington's *Dorchester*, p. 103.

³ Vol. V., p. 126.

⁴ Vol. I., p. 307.

⁵ Kemble, *Cod. Dipl.*, III. 286.

⁶ Parker's *Oxford*, p. 392.

⁷ Bp. Stubbs, *Reg. Sac. Angl.*, p. 224.

⁸ Parker's *Oxford*, p. 138.

erected to him in the fourteenth century. And as Leland merely says that the effigy "lay on the tomb" which an inscription indicated as Æschwine's, we may dismiss entirely the idea that it is his effigy, whether Leland read correctly or not the name upon the tomb where it lay. Addington rightly says that the effigy "has been erroneously described as that of the Saxon bishop Æschuine."¹

Nor do we know anything of any contemporary bishop to whom it can be assigned; for it is certainly of too early date to represent, as some have suggested, Bishop De la Bere of St. David's, who was a benefactor of the bridge at Dorchester and was commemorated among the benefactors of the abbey, and who resigned his bishopric in 1460.²

But it is stated in Gardner's History of Oxfordshire that "in the chancel is the tomb of the founder, St. Birinus."³ The effigy in question does not appear ever to have been in the chancel; but it is the only one that can have been reasonably taken to be a memorial of the saint.

NOTE IV

ON THE WINDOWS AT DORCHESTER⁴

The beautiful ancient glass which depicts the story of St. Berin in Dorchester Abbey is the more interesting as showing how the commemoration of the saint was kept in view in the successive enlargements of that church. The oldest account of it is in a letter of Thomas Warton, dated Oxford, May 28, 1785, from which Gough published an extract in the *Velusta Monumenta* of the Society of Antiquaries (Vol. II., Notes on Plates xxxix., xl., p. 3): "I find at Dorchester the following imageries, either in painted glass or in the masonry of the windows. First window in the north aisle, from the west, the deck of a ship, with a head crowned; Birinus sailing to England. In the second, Birinus baptizing Kinigils, king of the West Saxons; Birinus in a green vestment; Oswald, king of Northumberland, his god-father, with attendants. In the fifth, under a bishop, *Sanctus Birinus*; near him, the figure of Honorius, the Pope who sent him to convert the West Saxons. These are in the glass."

¹ *Dorchester*, p. 36.

² *Ibid.* pp. 135, 6.

³ *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Oxford* (1852), p. 830.

⁴ See ch. XII., p. 180.

That the *north aisle* means the *nave* is evident from Gough, who (in Camden's *Britannia*, 1789, Vol. I., p. 307), after describing the chancel windows, adds that "in the north window of the nave is painted more of the history of Birinus": and Brewer (in the Oxfordshire volume of *The Beauties of England and Wales*, published in 1818, p. 375) says that the "passages in the history of Birinus" in the east window "were removed about four years back to their present situation under the superintendence of Captain Kennett" (see Parker, *Dorchester*, p. xxi, who, however, confuses this glass with that of the Jesse window north of the altar, of which the writer of Skelton's note says, in 1823, that "Colonel Kennett did neither move nor add to the glass in this window." *Antiq. of Oxfordshire*, Dorchester Hundred, p. 8). Hence it appears that the first and second of Warton's enumeration are the two large windows of the nave; after which, passing over the two patchwork windows of the seventeenth century in what was formerly the transept, "the fifth window" would be the first of the early Decorated windows of the north choir-aisle, over the doorway: and we know from Gough's account (as cited above) that one of these windows then contained some of the glass which is now in the great east window, namely, a kneeling figure of a monk named *Radulfus de Trwe* (see Addington, p. 41).

The scene of the voyage, described by Warton as in the "first window," and mentioned also by Hearn in 1719 (see above, p. 181), is lost. That "in the second" is doubtless the panel now in the east window, where the saint's hand is raised in preaching to the king, and Warton supposes that he is baptising him, as Addington (p. 43) supposes that he is crowning him. The figures "in the fifth window" are now in the lights of the sedilia, where Addington also, like Warton, mistakes an archbishop for a pope. Some of the glass is said to have been robbed from the church in the early days of its restoration, about 1855, when it had been carefully laid aside with a view to replacement; and probably the picture of the voyage was among this.

The glass in the sedilia is described by the late Professor Freeman (Parker's *Dorchester*, p. 80) as "old glass of the twelfth century": that is, it had belonged to the Norman windows and had been replaced in the Decorated windows which superseded them. We have seen also that some portions of the glass in the east window belonged to the north aisle of the choir, which was built in the time of Edward I., and other portions belonged to the windows which were inserted in the nave in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Much of this is probably of the same periods as the windows, but some may be Norman. Addington (p. 42) suggests that a king's head, with the inscription *S. Eadmund Rex*, which Skelton describes as "from

the north window of the nave," may well be of the time of Henry III., who regarded this saint as his special patron.

Warton's letter to Gough proceeds to describe also the sculptures "in the east window of the choir, in the masonry." One of these he takes to be "a figure sitting, blessing a female figure kneeling before it: perhaps Birinus blessing the daughter of Kinigils before he married her to Oswald." Another he calls "a martyrdom: perhaps the decollation of Birinus." But this is purely fanciful. The two sculptures, in the order in which he specifies them, represent, the one, our Lord rising from the tomb and the soldiers resting in front of it; the other, our Lord bearing the cross and Satan whispering in His ear (see above, ch. XII., p. 180). An inspection of them shows how Warton mistook them. There is, however, a series of smaller sculptures, partly defaced, in the upper part of the window, and among these are three figures in a ship, and also an adult baptism.

NOTE V

ON THE TENOR BELL AT DORCHESTER¹

It is curious that St. Berin's bell, like the stone effigy already described, should have been connected with the name of Bishop Æschwine. Hearne, in his notes of July 15, 1711, says that it "is dedicated to St. Birinus and Æschwine"; but his next words, that it "was made at the charge of Fryer Astwood," show that he misread the inscription: *Protege Birine quos convoco tu sine fine. Raf Rastwold*. Seeing the *ine* in rhyme with *Birine*, in characters with which he was not familiar, and having much in his mind the name of Æschwine which he had hoped to find on a monument,² he evidently read the final words as Æschwine. Fryer Astwood. Similarly he mistook the words on the fourth bell, which by an odd blunder invoke *Sancta Toma*, and thought it was dedicated to St. Anne.

Of the date of St. Berin's bell, as indicated by its character, we have perhaps a corroborative evidence in the founder's name, if we may suppose that "Raf Rastwold" is identical with a Ralph Restwald who was a free tenant in the neighbouring manor of Bensington in 1316, and was apparently assessed at four shillings in the first year of Edward III. among the principal inhabitants of the place, where his family had been one of influence during the preceding century.³

¹ See ch. XII., p. 182.

² See Note III.

³ Pearman's *Bensington*, pp. 53, 54, 60.

NOTE VI

ON AN ANCIENT RING FOUND AT DORCHESTER

The supposed Episcopal Ring of St. Berin has been mentioned in several recent works relating to Dorchester, and must not be left unnoticed here. The first account of it appears to be given by Gough in his edition of Camden's *Britannia*, 1789, together with an engraving of it. He says (I., p. 307) :

"In a garden behind the church was dug up in 1736 a small ring of the purest gold, inscribed with the year of Birinus' consecration, 636. In it was set a cornelian, the figure on which . . . was supposed a mitre on an altar or pillar, by the late Mr. Bilson, a proctor of the University Court, and rector of St. Clement's, Oxford, to whom the ring was given, and who, after refusing twenty guineas for it, left it to Mr. Applegarth, schoolmaster, next door to the White Hart, and he to Mr. Day, whose brother, a wheeler, now possesses it in 1781."

This account is repeated in Brewer's *Beauties of England and Wales*, 1818 (Vol. XII., Part II., p. 373), with a note that "the ring is now in the possession of Mr. Philips, a carpenter, at Wallingford."

Skelton also repeats this (1823), but notes that "there is a sharpness in the style of the figures, which, together with the character of them, seems to indicate that the date was subsequently added."

Efforts to trace its ownership at the present time have failed. But apart from the great improbability of a ring of that period bearing a date, the letters which form this date, as figured by Gough, are pronounced by experts to be of late mediæval character; and we must conclude that if they are represented with any approach to accuracy, the date which is read as **DCXXXVI.** was probably **MDXXXVI.**

The design upon the gem, as shown in Gough's engraving—a short pillar with a conical head like a mitre and with infulæ attached to the middle—is evidently a Roman *meta*, the favourite symbol of good luck; and Roman gems of this kind were frequently used in mediæval rings. We must therefore put aside as mythical the supposition that the ring found at Dorchester was that of St. Berin's investiture.

NOTE VII

Translation of a Homily for the festival of St. Birin from the Ms. of Abingdon Abbey in the Bodleian Library (Ms. Digby 39, fol. 52a—56a).

A Homily to be solemnly recited on his holy Festival.

Rejoice in the Lord, dearly beloved brethren, who are come together for the sacred solemnities of our most holy father and protector S. Birin; and be glad with spiritual joy, and from the inmost feeling of your heart praise together the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who by the preaching of this holy priest has vouchsafed to bring this our province of the West Saxons from the errors of idolatry to the acknowledgment of His own most holy Name. Let us therefore follow with one mind the footsteps of so holy a teacher; let us not be degenerate sons of such a father; but let us imitate with all the nobleness we can the holiness of behaviour of his life. Let us cast away from us, according to that saying of the Blessed Apostle, the works of darkness, and let us put upon us the armour of light: let us walk honestly as in the day. For the night of ignorance is past, and the light of true knowledge has shined upon us; therefore let us walk as children of light in all chastity and piety. Let none of us have the seeds of wickedness or malice hidden in our hearts; for man looks on the face but God considers the heart, and nothing can be hidden from the eyes of His Omnipotence. Let us prepare ourselves in all goodness, that this our illustrious prelate and pious preacher, Birin,—whose birth-feast let us to-day celebrate devoutly,—may rejoice to bring us before the judgment-seat of the most high Judge at the last day; so that from the multitude of so many sons his glory may be increased, and we with him may be found worthy to hear that desirable sentence: Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world. He from the heavenly country ceases not to aid our conflict daily with pious prayers, desiring that his dearest sons, whom with fatherly love he has begotten in Christ, should attain to the glory of the unending beatitude. Wherefore, brethren beloved, let every one in his own order, according to his opportunities, bravely resist the suggestions of the devil, that he may be made worthy to receive with our pious parent the eternal crown of triumph. For the sufferings of this present time, as says the Apostle, are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory which shall be revealed in us. Therefore the Divine Love has willed the time of our labour to be short, that the retribution of our conflict may be unending, and that for our temporal tribulation we may rejoice in the reward of an enduring glory.

Therefore, when the acts of the priest beloved of God were being read, brief as they were, we heard how great devotion he had in all goodness. We heard also the great and wonderful and truly laudable constancy of his heart in the Lord: for when the blessed Archbishop of the Church of Canterbury, Augustine (as it is read in the acts of this country), both by the request and by the exhortation of blessed Gregory, came with many teachers of the Christian faith to the province of the Kentish men, which thus far had been given over to idolatry but was somewhat softened now; this man of his own accord, with the advice of the blessed Pope Honorius, came undaunted to this nation of ours, at that time most pagan, to do battle with the devil. And whereas the other ministered the divine word with the support of many teachers, this man ministered it, so to say, alone, and yet not alone, for God ministered it with him. And it pleased the love of God that another thing also should be added for the greater credit of his preaching, as is plain to those who piously understand. When the king of the aforesaid Kentish nation had heard the word of life from his own teachers, he is reported,—that I may use the words of the historian,—to have made this reply: Beautiful indeed are the words and promises which you assert; but since they are new and uncertain, I cannot give assent to them and leave those whom I and all the nation of the English have so long time served. This therefore is what I would say: that although that blessed king before-mentioned did afterwards believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with his whole heart, yet at the beginning of the preaching he was darkened with gainsaying and doubtfulness of mind, and this was manifestly a more laborious work for his teachers: but this our own exalted and beloved one obtained by Christ's aid so much and so speedy grace at the very beginning of his discourse, that he heard naught of gainsaying and naught of opposing doubt, and perceived naught of harshness; but when he preached in the province, King Cynegils himself without delay was catechised, and was washed together with his people in the font of baptism; and in order that his believing with all his heart might be known to all, he granted to his regenerator with all eagerness of mind a city suitable for his bishopric. And he adorned that city by dedicating churches, and by his pious labour he increased it with Christian people; and when he was afterwards to receive the crown of life by the gift of the Supreme Rewarder, he was for a long period of time entombed in the body in the same church, but by the providence of God's grace was afterwards translated into this our city; for he was given and granted to us, not for our merits but solely by the free mercy of God, that we might have his patronage and consolation.

But that we may not seem ungrateful for so great favour, and may not be judged unworthy of the presence of such a father, let us walk with all the eagerness of our mind and with all the power of our

strength in the footsteps of his life, that we may become worthy to be made partakers of the blessedness in which he reigns with Christ. Let no carnal desire, no worldly ambition, hinder our journey. Let us run by works of piety to the gates of the heavenly country. The citizens of the Eternal City are waiting for us. The King Himself, Who will have all men to be saved, is ardently longing, together with His Saints, for our salvation. For it behoves us to be fellow-workers in our salvation with Him Who so greatly loved us that He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all. Let us love Him because He first loved us. Let us do His will, because His will is our happiness. Let us keep ever in mind what the Truth Itself answered to a certain rich man in the Gospel : If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. What are the commandments but love of God and love of our neighbour ? On these two precepts hang all the Law and the Prophets. The love of our neighbour, then, is proved in works of mercy. Therefore he that hath this world's substance, let him aid him that hath not : he that hath the knowledge of the doctrine, let him correct the erring ; since the Apostle James saith, Whosoever shall turn a sinner from the error of his way shall save his soul from death and shall hide the multitude of his own sins. We ought to know, beloved brethren, that as many souls as a man shall have gained for the Lord, so many rewards shall he receive from God. How much glory suppose ye that St. Byrín has in the heavenly kingdom with Christ, who by his diligent preaching won so innumerable people to Christ on earth ? Or how great is the glory of his soul above the stars among the angels, while his body has so great honour among men ? Or what cannot he obtain by the prayers of his piety in heaven, who shone with so great miracles in the world ? But greater than all miracles is the perseverance of his evangelical preaching and the fragrance of holy brightness in his heart. For right manfully did he study to multiply the talents of the Lord's money that he had received ; therefore shall he hear with happiness the Lord saying to him : Well done, good and faithful servant ; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Small are the good things of this present life in comparison of the good things to come ; but he who labours faithfully in these shall rest happily in those. This Saint, to whose festival you have been willing to hasten together, laboured for the salvation of many ; therefore shall he receive in the day of judgment the reward of many. Himself he weakened by the rigour of his abstinence ; others he profited by the diligence of his preaching ; therefore stands he forth worthy to be praised by all, according to the word of Solomon the most wise : The memory of the just is with praises, but the name of the wicked shall rot. While the life of the just shall be praised, the iniquity of the wicked

like filth is abhorred by all. What is happier than in a good conversation to deserve eternally the glory of blessedness from the Lord, and to be praised by the mouth of all men? Let us think day by day : With what confidence may we come before the tribunal of the most high Judge? What good work may we bring with us? His justice will accept no man's person, but He shall render to every man according to his works ; and he who labours the more in the work of God shall receive the more reward in the kingdom of God. Let every man in the same calling wherein he was called, therein manfully work out his own salvation. To all men the gate of the heavenly kingdom opens ; but the quality of their deserts brings in one, drives out another. How miserable is it for a man to be shut out from the glory of the saints, and to be assigned with the devil to eternal flames ! The burden of sins plunges the soul in hell : the abundance of righteousness lifts it up to heavenly glory. Let us oftener frequent the Church of Christ ; let us hear in it more diligently the words of God ; and that which we receive with the ear let us keep with the heart, that we may bring forth the fruit of good work. In patience and brotherly love let every one study to help another. Let us have the illustrious examples of the most holy Byrín our father abundantly before us, in every duty of charity, in fervour of faith, in long-suffering of hope, and in perseverance in all goodness. While we celebrate him with so great praise and love him with so great love, let us with full intentness of mind follow his footsteps in all holy conversation ; so that running the way of his life we may deserve to receive the glory of eternal blessedness with him, by the aid of the Eternal King, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth God for ever and ever. Amen.

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